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SHELLEY POEMS PUBLISHED IN 1820

EDITED WITH INTRODUCTION
AND NOTES BY
A. M. D. HUGHES

SECOND EDITION

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PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION

FOR this second edition of the poems of 1820 I have re-written the prefatory Life and the Introduction to *Prometheus Unbound*, and augmented or reduced the notes. The seven pages of textual notes are removed as unnecessary in a book of this kind. My attempt has been to explain obscurities of meaning and in the case of *Prometheus Unbound* to interpret the poem as a whole. For this purpose I have not needed to consult the many books on Shelley that have appeared in the last forty years, and have seldom alluded to authorities. I have consulted Mr. C. D. Locock's *Examination of the Shelley Manuscripts in the Bodleian Library* (1903), but have departed from the text of Thomas Hutchinson in his edition of Shelley's poems (Oxford, 1905) in a very few instances. The chief authorities which I used in 1910 were the editions of Buxton Forman and W. M. Rossetti, and I have now had the advantage of the notes in Mr. C. D. Locock's two-volume edition of Shelley's poems (1911). Among other works consulted for the first edition I may mention Professor R. Ackermann's *Studien zu Shelley's 'Prometheus Unbound'* in *Englische Studien XVI*; W. M. Rossetti's *Shelley's 'Prometheus Unbound'; a Study of its Meaning and Personages*; James Thomson's *Notes on the Structure of Shelley's 'Prometheus Unbound'* in *The Athenaeum* 1881, and the commentary by Vida D. Scudder (Boston 1892). I have abstained from literary criticism for there is

plenty of it elsewhere. In preparing the first edition I was greatly indebted to Ernest de Selincourt who allowed me to consult him on many ambiguities.

A. M. D. H.

PREFACE

THIS volume aims at producing a critical edition, with textual and explanatory notes, of the poems published by Shelley in 1820, under the title of *Prometheus Unbound* | A Lyrical Drama | In Four Acts | With Other Poems. As Shelley was always a careless transcriber of his own verse, and never saw the proofs of *Prometheus*, an exact reprint of the text would have a merely bibliographical value ; but every deviation from the text of 1820 has been duly recorded in my notes.

The commentator on Shelley's *Prometheus Unbound* is aided at every turn by two critics who were among the first to survey and clear the subject—Mr. W. M. Rossetti (*Shelley's Prometheus Unbound ; a Study of its Meaning and Personages*, and *Shelley's Prometheus Unbound Considered as a Poem* in the Shelley Society's Papers) and Dr. John Todhunter (*Shelley : A Study*, London, 1880). They do not always agree with each other, and even on important points the student must choose between them or may go his own road ; while in detail they have left plenty of ground to be traced ; but no one can make notes on the poem without owing them a great deal. Beside the well-known complete editions of Shelley's

poetry by Mr. Rossetti and Mr. Buxton Forman, there are, so far as I know, two large editions of the *Prometheus*—one by Professor Richard Ackermann (Heidelberg, 1908) and one by Vida D. Scudder (Boston, 1892, in Heath's English Classics). I have had these works constantly before me in preparing my notes. Helene Richter, whose biography of the poet is so well known in Germany, has issued a translation of the *Prometheus* in Reclam's *Universal-Bibliothek*, and has appended a number of notes. The poem is also printed, with an Introduction and a few notes on the text by G. L. Dickinson, in Dents' *Temple Dramatists*, London, 1898. My special obligations I have acknowledged as they occur.

Other aids to the study of these poems are:—

Professor R. Ackermann, *Studien zu Shelley's Prometheus Unbound*, in *Englische Studien* XVI.

Dr. Arним Kroder, *Shelleyana*, in the *Festschrift zum XII^{ten} allgemeinen Deutschen Neuphilologentage*.

Professor Ernst Sieper, *Spuren ophitisch-gnostischer Einflüsse in den Dichtungen Shelley's*, in Herrig's *Archiv für das Studium der neueren Sprachen und Literatur* CXX. pp. 315 foll.

Swinburne's paper on Shelley in *Essays and Studies*, 1875.

James Thomson, *Notes on The Structure of Shelley's Prometheus Unbound*, in *The Athenæum*, 1881.

Mr. C. D. Locock has kindly given me permission to make a free use of his *Examination of the Shelley Manuscripts in the Bodleian Library*, and I have also had at hand the results of Zupitza's investigation of these Manuscripts reported by Professor Schick in Herrig's *Archiv* CII, CIII. In matters of literary judgement I have continually kept in mind Mr. A. Clutton-Brock's *Shelley: the Man and the Poet*, London, 1909. The verse renderings of the *Prometheus Vinctus* of Aeschylus are from Mrs. Browning's translation.

Lastly, I should like to express my sincere thanks to Professor Ernest de Sélincourt for plentiful and valuable help. He has given me generously of his time, and has allowed me to send him my Introductions and Notes as they were written, so that in numerous cases I have profited by his criticism and advice. For my errors, however, he is not responsible.

A. M. D. HUGHES.

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THE LIFE OF SHELLEY

PERCY BYSSHE, the eldest child of Timothy and Elizabeth Shelley, of Field Place near Horsham, was born in his father's house on 4 August 1792. The Shelleys had held lands and borne arms in that part of England since they came over with the Conqueror, and perhaps the unworldliest of them all was heir to a baronetcy, a large estate, and virtually to a seat in Parliament. After two years at Sion House, a private school at Brentford, he spent six more at Eton and a little time at Oxford; but neither environment nor education could make him fit for the calling to which he was born. Dreamy and sensitive, daring and impetuous, with a hungry mind and a passion for the ideal, he was incurably wayward and by many supposed to be mad. At home, when they sent him to shoot game, he would read a book while the gamekeeper filled the bag, or would prowl at night in churchyards in the hope of communing with the dead. At Eton he was the same gentle and intractable being, absorbed in his own devices. The authorities disliked him and the mob tormented him, but he went indomitably on his way. By a natural inclination he fell for a time to the Gothic novel of mystery and terror and before leaving school had one of his own in print and another a little after (*Zastrozzi* and *St. Irvyne*), as well as a long Gothic poem (*The Wandering Jew*) seeking publication. No young scholar could have taken more readily to the Greek and Latin classics, and he

dabbled by himself in chemical and electrical experiments, and towards the end, in daring speculation on religion and society. He read the *Political Justice* of William Godwin and, as we may be fairly sure, the *Symposium* of Plato and, probably in his last term at school, before or after reading them, he made the 'great resolves' of which he wrote in the *Hymn to Intellectual Beauty* and in the dedicatory lines to Mary in *The Revolt of Islam*. On an early summer morning, his thoughts, running as they often did on the notion of a deity who watches the doings of men from far on high, and requites them in the after-world with bliss or bale, the beauty and the life of things were suddenly a spiritual presence descending on him with the intimation of a kinder faith. From that day he was the servant of 'an unknown Power' that now hides itself and now shines out 'in glory and in good' in the face of Nature and the heart of Man and will one day break the chains in which men and nations pine. Early on another day in the same time of year, walking in a field or garden, he heard the familiar sounds of the bully and his victim in the nearby school-room, and with clasped hands and a burst of tears, vowed to be 'wise and just and free and mild' and to spend his life in the cause of the weak against the strong.¹ He left Eton in the summer of 1810 estranged from its old conservatism and bound for the enemy's camp.

¹ I assume that this incident took place not at Sion House, but late in his time at Eton. Most of the biographers, following Dowden, place it at Sion House, but the view taken here rests on slight evidence and great likelihood.

In the autumn he went up to Oxford to enter University College, and at once fell in with Thomas Jefferson Hogg, who many years after drew his portrait in immortal reminiscences. Hogg, the son of a north country lawyer, was a lover of the classics, a keen and satirical observer, a comfortable sceptic and an affectionate friend. His Shelley stands before us to this day: the tall and slender form, the disordered locks, the rumpled and neglected dress, the swift gestures, and in the face 'a fire, an enthusiasm, a vivid intelligence that I never met with in any other countenance'. 'Nor was the moral expression less beautiful; for there was a delicacy, a gentleness, and especially that air of profound religious veneration that characterizes the best works of the great masters of Florence and Rome.' Nor were the signs of impetuous living less manifest in Shelley's rooms, where books and clothing, microscopes and batteries, and all manner of things were strewn about, and at any moment fluid chemicals would burn and fume. The two friends were always together, little known or liked by the undergraduates or the Fellows of the College, reading Homer or Plato, it might be, or Locke or Hume, and calling all things in doubt at their firesides or on their long walks. As always, Shelley's pen was running, and in his first term a batch of his poems, purporting to be written by Margaret Nicholson, the mad laundress who attempted the life of the King, appeared in a sumptuous quarto and excited a day's wonder. The revolutionary sentiment of these pieces was hardly disguised by a veneer of burlesque, for he was already on the war-path, dispensing his money

or his praise to notorious agitators. *Political Justice*, first issued in 1793, had not lost its power over fervent and unwary minds. That government is an evil, that property is theft, that classes and institutions are chains upon humanity, that the reasonable man can and should walk in his own light and his own control: these were propositions that Shelley came in time to modify or disbelieve, though he could hope that far in the future they would be true. But Godwin's indictment of things as they were, and his vision of a time when men and women shall live together, free and equal, in joy and peace, ravished him. 'There shall be no disease, no anguish, no melancholy, and no resentment, but every man will seek with ineffable ardour the good of all.' The main hindrance to this felicity was the harsh theology that cowed the human spirit and set on high the priest and the king. For Shelley therefore, the religious issue was of the first moment to society as well as to himself. It had already brought him into trouble. In the Christmas vacation he had alarmed his family with the deism to which his superficial Christianity had given way, and what was nearly an engagement to his cousin, Harriet Grove, was broken off, ostensibly for that reason. But his religious soul wanted the intimacy of human and divine that in deism he missed and in the visitation of Intellectual Beauty had found. The Necessity of Atheism, the perversely entitled pamphlet that he had printed in February 1811 and sent about to bishops and heads of houses and with his own hand strewed on the counter of a bookseller's shop, denied a personal and creative divinity, but acknowledged 'a

Spirit co-eternal with the Universe'. It was prefaced by a humble request to his readers for more light, but the humility, not altogether pretended, was of no advantage to him. He had committed an arrant breach of discipline, and in respect of theology those were days of anger and alarm. On 25 March he was expelled from the College, and Hogg, accused of complicity and refusing to deny it, along with him.

Five months divided this misadventure from the next. Timothy Shelley, a stupid, self-important, irascible man, could not take his son's disgrace in moderation. His own orthodoxy was a form, but it was at once incensed when his lawyer told him that the author of the pamphlet could be put in court for blasphemy. Shelley, now in London, short of money and quite at a loose end, resisted the demand that he should unsay what he really thought and petition the College to take him back or, failing that, should submit to a tutor and sever himself from Hogg. When these proposals had been rejected, and Hogg had left him, he beguiled his loneliness with what for a time was a mild flirtation. At a school at Clapham, where two of his sisters had been placed, was Harriet, sixteen years old, the younger of the two daughters of John Westbrook, who had retired from the keeping of a coffee-house and was living in Chapel Street in the region of Grosvenor Square. She had a beauty that drew all eyes upon her, and was bright, cordial, and unaffected, but although fairly educated by the standard of a ladies' school, she could never have made an intellectual companion for Shelley, and, in all she desired or did, was dominated by

her sister Eliza, her senior by ten years, whose vulgar mind and unlovely person Hogg so trenchantly describes. Eliza saw at once that here was a match to be made, and made it. With her encouragement the boy and girl were often together, and Harriet, as time wore on, listened readily to his 'free opinions'. In May, however, he departed for Field Place, there to spend the next two months. His father, under pressure from several advisers, had waived his demands for a time and received him unconditionally. But to both his parents—Squire and Squire's daughter—he was unintelligible, and, aimless and solitary in his own home, was eager to be gone and doing. In his excited letters to Hogg, the 'social flame' burns and teases him with no one object on which to fasten, but meanwhile there were many letters from Harriet about her loneliness and her father's intention to send her back to school, where, as the friend of an infidel, she was despitefully treated. Early in July Shelley was in London on purpose to plead for her. Early in August, while staying at Cwm Elan, his cousin's estate near Rhayader, he received an urgent summons, and hurried to her side. The threat of sending her to school was soon to take effect. She told him she loved him, and he promised to protect her, and throw in his lot with hers. Was she not a martyr to his faith, a sufferer for his sake? Later in the month her father held to his intention, and Shelley took the plunge. He absconded with her to Edinburgh and there, on 28 August 1811, a minister of the Church of Scotland made them man and wife. 'If I know anything about love', he had written to Hogg a fortnight previously, 'I am not in

love.' Before mounting the coach on the morning of his flight he breakfasted at an inn with his cousin, Charles Grove. 'Grove', he said, throwing away the oyster shells, 'this is a Shelley business', and that it had indeed no core to it was in not much more than two years evidently true.

At first, however, she gained upon him by her natural kindness, and did her best to partake of his ideas. And their fathers saw to it that their needs were modestly provided for. But he made an immense mistake when they had to break with Hogg, who had violated their hospitality by unseemly behaviour to his young hostess, and Harriet, as if she were unprotected, and Shelley to please her, permitted Eliza Westbrook to take them under her wing. From now onwards she lived with them and came between them. Nor was Shelley a wise man when he induced the ardent feminist, his soulful correspondent, Elizabeth Hitchener, to leave her proprietary school at Hurstpierpoint, and as his pensioner and a member of his household assist him in his propaganda and in the education of his wife. She proved to be no luminary, and ill to live with, and having tried the arrangement for six months in the following spring and summer, took leave of them in a blaze of anger on every side.

But no troubles diverted Shelley from his sovereign purpose. At the close of 1811 and the beginning of 1812, during a stay at Keswick, he conversed with Southey and disagreed with him. In February and March he was in Dublin campaigning for Catholic Emancipation and the repeal of the Union. He wrote two pamphlets and gave

one out in the streets, spoke for an hour at a big meeting, and saw himself reviled or applauded in the Irish Press. But Don Quixote would have done as well. He too would have told the Catholics and the Protestants that their differences were nugatory, that they must think more and drink less, and by patience achieve their ends. In August of the same year a broadsheet entitled *A Declaration of Rights*, originally intended for Dublin, brought its author into serious danger, for the eyes of Government were already upon him. While staying at Lynmouth he caused his Irish servant to post it up on walls and buildings, and himself launched it on the sea in bottles and boxes, that winds and waves might carry it to other shores. The authorities were soon upon the trail: the Irishman was sent to jail, and Shelley and his household took flight across the Channel to Wales. Here he was again a knight errant. William Alexander Madocks, the founder of Tremadoc, had, a little while before this date, built a cause-way across the flats that divide Caernarvon from Merioneth in order to reclaim the land on which he built his town, but the sea had breached it to the imminent danger of the area behind. Shelley took a lease of Tan-y-rallt, the founder's villa, and for six months drained his purse and his strength in forwarding the appeal for money to retrieve the disaster. The breach was eventually healed, but by then he had been hunted from the place. His doings in Ireland were known, his bills unpaid, and one or more of his enemies in the town were resolved to have him out. During the night of 27 February 1813, unless the story was a fiction of his own brain, he was twice shot at

and grappled with his assailant in the house. He left it the next day in great distress of mind. In April, after a brief visit to Ireland, he moved to London for another chapter of his 'haggard existence'. He was never again to 'mix with action'.

In the period from April 1813 to the August of the following year, he began to pass from the crudity and confidence of his youth to a wider and wiser mind, and was forwarded on his way by a passion deeper for the time than any other of his conceiving. *Queen Mab*, published a month after he arrived in London and instantly suppressed, is the principal document of his immaturity. It follows in the track of Godwin with visions of the baleful past and the blissful future, and brings in the Spirit that moves in the natural world and in the doings of man. But as to his own calling as a reformer, he began to be cautious. Ever since the January of 1812 he had exchanged long letters with Godwin, and in the autumn of that year had met him in person. He was now to see him frequently, but not always pleasantly. Godwin never tired of telling him how young he was, how unfit for leadership, and how vain would be the endeavour to force the growth of liberty and further it by any means but the private meditation of the individual. Shelley had accordingly ceased to think of the Association of Reformers that in one of the Irish pamphlets he had planned to set on foot. He now encountered other influences that might teach him sobriety. He had renewed his friendship with Hogg, and was often in company with the 'cold scholar' and mocking humorist, Thomas Love Peacock. At Bracknell in Berkshire,

Harriet Boinville, the widow of a Girondist refugee, opened her house to friends of the Revolution, and nursed its declining hope. With her and her daughter, Cornelia Turner, gracious and cultured women, he became intimate, and they taught him Italian and with him read the Italian poets. Another friend was a man of one idea, Newton the vegetarian, who converted him to the faith, so that from now onwards he lived on roots and fruits and other innocent foods.

All these lively interests made him aware of what he missed and what he endured at home. He and his young wife were drawing apart. She had tried to become his neophyte, but could not keep it up. Cheerfulness was always breaking in, and not that only, but the demand of a fine lady for stylish dresses and a carriage and plate. She had her way and he was the sooner disillusioned. In June 1813 she bore her first child, Ianthe, but he had to see it in the jealous hands of Eliza, whom by now he fairly loathed.

When they moved to Bracknell in the following month, Harriet must have felt that they were in daily touch with rivals who put her in the shade. In October and November he took her and the child on an excursion to the Lakes and Edinburgh, Eliza and Peacock with them. She enjoyed the holiday, but on their return relapsed into the cold and hard demeanour that had previously distressed him. Two of his poems written at Bracknell in March and April 1814, and a sonnet written in May, appealed to her in plangent tones of loneliness and rejectedness for a return of her affection. In May he left her in their home at

Bracknell and took lodgings in London in order to raise money for Godwin's necessities, and his own.

Godwin, now at the age of fifty-six, had lapsed in time and passion from the once fearless champion of the liberal spirit. Eighteen years before he had married Mary Wollstonecraft, who had borne him a daughter, Mary, at the cost of her life. He had then married the cross-grained widow, Mrs. Clairmont, and with her aid set up in business as a publisher and vendor of literature for the young. He lived in Skinner Street, Holborn, in the dwelling above his shop, and enjoyed the affection of three adopted children and two of his own. The business went badly, and for years to come he preyed remorselessly on Shelley's resources. At Skinner Street the distressed Shelley met and fell in love with Mary. Her parentage, her beauty, her compassion, her intellectual sympathies and his own wretchedness so drew them together that by July they had declared their love for each other without a hope of a closer union. Nor perhaps would they have gone further, if Shelley had not convinced himself on testimony unknown to us, that Harriet had been unfaithful to her marriage vow. It is certain that there were allegations to that effect, and that to the end of his life he accepted them, and equally certain that not one of their common friends, apart from Godwin, believed them to be true. He called her to him in London from Bath, where she was then staying. She arrived on 14 July, and in an interview with her on the same day he told her that he must part from her. He said that they had been united by friendship and never by passion, and that he still was and would be her devoted friend; but his

heart was given to Mary, and only her consent to set him free could save him and Mary from suicide. It is clear from a letter that he wrote to her at the close of the same day that she consented to the parting or at least used words that Shelley could so construe.¹ But the concession was momentary, and given, perhaps, in fright. Peacock had her own assurance that she had never consented, and tells us moreover that Shelley to him at least never asserted that she had. She was now pregnant with her second child, and many weeks were to pass before she wavered in the conviction that he would soon return to her. But in another fortnight the agony of the decision that brought Shelley to the brink of self-slaughter was over and the die was cast. On 28 July 1814 Shelley and Mary stole away to Dover in company with Claire (or Jane), Mrs. Clairmont's daughter, crossed to Calais, and for the next six weeks were travelling on the Continent.

It will be well here to give the sequel of these events. The extraordinary letter that on 13 August he wrote to Harriet from Troyes, asking her to join them and live with them as his friend but not his wife, is surely the sign of a troubled conscience as well as of the affection he still bore her. No one who has read Peacock's memoirs will forget the description of Shelley in the conflict of the old love with the new. He told himself now and after that he had dealt honestly with her, but the thought must at

¹ Newman Ivey White (*Shelley*, i. 340) interprets the letter which he cites in full to this effect, and it can hardly bear another meaning. 'She allowed him to believe', he writes, 'that if his present feelings were not a passing fever she would not continue to oppose them.'

times have crept in that he should rather have 'endured all things'. The prospect brightened for her when in the ensuing December she bore his second child, Charles Bysshe, of whom in the lucid state of his mind he never doubted that he was the father. But as time wore on and her one hope came to nothing, she gave in to her despair and ceased to live virtuously. She was safe from want, for Shelley had so provided, lived in her father's house, and had her children in her care. In or soon before November 1816 she left her father and sister and disappeared. Shelley, who since the rupture had seen or written to her now and then, tried in vain to find her. On 10 December her body was recovered from the Serpentine river where it had been lying for some time, and there could be no doubt that she had drowned herself. As for him, there are many evidences that the remembrance of the calamity he had brought upon her haunted and disquieted him while he lived.

The three fugitives of August 1814, after journeying through Paris and the south of France to the Lake of Lucerne and descending a long stretch of the Rhine, returned to London in the middle of September. And Shelley was in for the worst distresses that he had ever to undergo: hiding from bailiffs, wrangling with money-lenders, old friends alienated, and Godwin refusing to take his hand, though not his money. But in the following January Sir Bysshe, his grandfather, died, and he was soon the master of £1,000 a year. Not that he was any nearer to a reconciliation with his father, who would not now admit him at Field Place, or even allow him to be

named. But he could 'live of his own' and, if fortune were propitious, do what his genius bade him with an easier mind. And before leaving England, early in 1818, he was a poet. Always depending on natural beauty to inspire him, he moved in August to Bishopgate Heath near Windsor, and under the spell of the river and the park composed the first poem with his especial mark upon it, *Alastor*. From May to September he was with Mary and Claire in a cottage near Coligny on the Lake of Geneva, a short walk from the Villa Diodati, where Byron was living in the first year of his exile. The two poets were daily and nightly companions, and for several days in June made the circuit of the lake in a sailing boat, and landed at the famous places. At Lausanne Byron plucked acacia leaves from the spot where Gibbon had completed *The Decline and Fall*; while Shelley would pay no homage to 'a cold and unimpassioned spirit', but at Clarens and Meillerie recaptured the enchantment of *La Nouvelle Héloïse*. On the one hand the lines on the *Prisoner of Chillon* and much of the third canto of *Childe Harold* were fruits of this memorable summer, and on the other the *Hymn to Intellectual Beauty* and the *Ode on Mont Blanc* written in an onset of passion high up in the Vale of Chamouni. And there can be few pages in literature beside that ode and the letters to Peacock that render the Alpine grandeur with equal power. For nearly a year from early in 1817 he lived at Great Marlow in the lap of a beloved landscape, and in his boat on the river or wandering in the woods wrote the epic romance of *The Revolt of Islam* in the metre and occasionally in the spirit of *The Faerie Queene*.

It is a tale of a revolution in the heart of the Turkish Empire at Istanbul, that for a while ran true to the pure ideal that the people of France had so sadly betrayed, and was crushed, as in France, by the European despots and their priestly tempters and tools. Greece and her mountains and seas are the hearth of the sacred flame, and a youth and a maiden, lovers and martyrs, kindle the heart of a people long stifled under a cold and lustful tyrant. The poem is full of the spirit of youth and a glowing faith in the concert of man and woman to save the world. These effluences of the poetry in him were pure happiness, but his life was consistently sorrowful in its ordinary course. Mary, indeed, whom he married after Harriet's death, was wise and loving, and gladdened him with two children: William, born in January 1816, and Clara a year and a half later. He had his old friends, Hogg and Peacock, and on returning from Switzerland made a new one in the amiable Leigh Hunt, a poet and the editor of the liberal *Examiner*, whose personal devotion and critical pen were on many occasions to come to his aid. But he was never happy with the wits and poets of Hunt's circle, Keats and Reynolds, Hazlitt and Lamb. Keats was unforthcoming, and Hazlitt disliked the fanatic and the visionary. And now misfortune fell upon him in stroke after stroke. In October 1816 the gentle and lovable Fanny, the daughter of Gilbert Imlay and Mary Wollstonecraft, who lived and drudged in Godwin's house, put an end to her unhappy life; a few weeks later came Harriet's death; and in March 1817 the court of Chancery at the suit of the Westbrooks debarred Shelley, as a man of immoral principles,

from the custody and education of Ianthe and Charles. Over and above the 'cruel anguish' of these events, he had to face a serious trouble owing to the presence in his house at Marlow of Claire and her infant daughter Allegra, the fruit of her clandestine amour with Byron, who had wearied of her. Shelley's generous giving to the poor in Marlow had not saved him from unsavoury gossip on the composition of his household, and it was high time that Claire should take the child to her father in Venice. There was another and a paramount reason for moving away. Shelley was always subject to nervous exhaustion and acute bodily pain, and was now convinced that only a warmer climate could save his life. In February 1818, taking with him Mary and her two children, and Claire and Allegra, he set out for Italy, never to return.

In the interval of some four years, in which he was attracted to the critical and destructive thinking of the Revolutionary era, he was denouncing the Christian dogma in a deistical colouring that had impeded his own religion. He had to say 'No' in order the more freely to say 'Yes'. That phase came to an end at the touch of his passion in the summer of 1814, when he recovered the light that in later boyhood had 'burst his spirit's sleep'. The Assassins, in the fragment of a tale which he began in that summer, are a Utopian people in an Arabian paradise 'visited' ever and again by 'a Spirit of extraordinary intelligence and power'. Burning in the beauty of the place, it kindles in them 'a sacred fire', so that 'to love, to be beloved, became an insatiable famine, the law of their lives and sustenance of their natures'. They knew

that the soul as an individual entity will not survive its tenement. But in communion with beauty they were one with the immortal being with which their own would be blended after death. In *Alastor* his faith recedes. In that poem love, or love in noble natures, is an impossible desire never to be stilled in this life or in a life to come. For Nature and her mutability, including the soul itself, are all that is or ever will be, and immortal longings only a vanity and a distress. He never returns to that degree of melancholy, but after *Alastor* continually rises from 'a hope that is too like despair' to his exultant trust in the goodness from beyond the world. And his faith becomes humarer. In Italy the mountains and seas, the storied cities, and all that had lasted or lay in ruins of the great ages of the past bring on the summer of his genius and acquaint him with more of nature and more of man. His chosen studies are the Greek tragedians, Shakespeare and Calderon, the *Divina Commedia*, and the writers of the Italian Renaissance. Under these influences the hope of the Revolution, though it still impasses him, has a secondary place in his poetry and is itself more in touch with life. The insurrections in 1820 and '21 in Spain and Naples and Greece reveal to him what in earlier years he would never have looked for, the march of history and the need of law. In *Hellas* (1821) the war of the Crescent and the Cross opens his eyes to the eminence of the Christian dispensation above others. And the Godwinian notion that man by his mental endeavour may make himself perfect perhaps soon and swiftly, is blown away in the last and greatest of his poems, *The Triumph of Life*, in which

with a power like Dante's, in whose influence it is steeped, he describes the force of Evil in all but the wisest and holiest of men, in learned and simple and great and small.

The rest of the story will be best related in chapters.

(i) *Leghorn, Venice, Este: from the spring to the autumn of 1818*

They entered Italy early in March and after looking in at Como and Milan proceeded to Leghorn where the merchant John Gisborne and Maria, his wife, were living. They were friendly and cultured people and the Shelleys were to owe them many kindnesses in the years to come. Maria Gisborne had been a friend of Mary Wollstonecraft's and had nursed the infant Mary after her mother's death. Henry Reveley, her son by a former marriage, was living with her, and labouring in a grotesque stithy, described in the *Letter* to her, to build a steam-boat, and Shelley was to rue the day when he lent him money for the work. One sore trouble had not been left in England. At Milan the unhappy and temperamental Claire had parted with Allegra and sent her to her father at Venice under a promise to resign her and see her no more. In August at the Baths of Lucca she could endure her loss no longer, and persuaded Shelley to take her secretly to Venice where she was able to see her child in the house of Mrs. Hoppner, the wife of the British Consul. And Byron, unaware of the broken promise, was induced by Shelley to return Allegra to her for a little while. The occasion is memorable, for it resulted in *Julian and Maddalo*. Byron was

staying in the Palazzo Mocenigo and amazing the city by his wild way of life. The Prelude to *Julian and Maddalo* tells how he rode with his guest on the waste of the Lido, and talked of his troubles, and recited newly written stanzas of the fourth canto of *Childe Harold*, and how in their conversation Shelleyan hopefulness strove with Byronic gloom. When the days were over Shelley, with Claire and Allegra, travelled to the hill-side of Este on the northern border of the Plain, where Byron had invited him to use his villa, I Capucini. But when Mary joined him their child Clara was sick from the heat of the journey and in grave danger. On 24 September the desperate parents hurried with her to Venice only to see her die. In their affliction Shelley had the advantage of an irresistible call. In September he wrote his poem on the days in Venice, and by early October finished the first Act of *Prometheus Unbound*. Later in the month in his *Lines written among the Euganean Hills*, looking over Lombardy to the Venetian towers, he passed from the thought of the dead child to the wrongs that in the scene before him man had done to man, and took the reassurance of the life of things as the beauty of the day went on. It was time to move on to the places that above all others he wished to see. On 5 November Shelley, Mary, and Claire with the children left Este, and, having parted with Allegra at Venice, turned for the south. At Ferrara they viewed the relics of Tasso and Ariosto and the dungeon in which Tasso pined. At Bologna they explored the galleries. On 20 November, having passed through the Apennines, they entered Rome.

(II) *Rome, Naples, and Rome again: from 29 November 1818 to 10 June 1819*

‘It is a city of the dead’, wrote Shelley, ‘or rather, of those who cannot die’, and it was the moral grandeur eloquent in desolation that came home to him in the few days of his first visit. In the uncompleted tale, written amid the majestic ruins of the Coliseum and named after it, a votary of his own religion sees the mark of the redeeming Power in the very place where the masters of the world let loose their cruelty and vainglory. ‘Time has thrown its purple shadow athwart the scene, and no more is visible than the broad and everlasting character of human strength and genius, the pledge of all that is admirable in ages yet to come.’ But at Naples, where they arrived on 29 November, he had entered a homeland of the Greeks and of a humaner and more sensitive spirit than that prevailing in Rome, or, as he thought, in modern Europe. The mountains, the islanded Bay, the ruined temple at Paestum, the remains at Pompeii, quickened his admiration of a life inspired by the cult of beauty. But during the three months of their residence a profound melancholy lay upon him, the causes of which are obscure. Apart from the death of his child and Mary’s disconsolate sorrow, and apart from the pain or lassitude so incident to him, it seems that at this time a trouble of an extraordinary kind came to a head. Shelley told Medwin that before he left England, in the summer of 1814, a young lady, married and nobly connected, declared her love for him. Disappointed, in 1816 she followed him to

Geneva, and in 1818 to Naples, where he saw and talked with her, and where she presently died. It is a known fact¹ that in December 1818 Shelley, appearing before a Neapolitan magistrate, declared a new-born child to be his and Mary's, that in the following February the child was baptized under the Christian names of Elena Adelaide, that he placed her under tutelage in the city, and that in July 1820 she died, 'One more memory', he wrote, 'to those that already torture me.' It is certain that she was neither his child nor Mary's. This was the handle to a cruel calumny invented by a servant, that led to distressing consequences in 1821. It has been conjectured that the child was the lady's, and that, when dying, she commended her to his protection. If this story is true,² it will account in part for the beautiful and mournful *Lines written in Dejection near Naples*.

On 5 March he was again in Rome, that 'inexhaustible mine of thoughts and feelings'. His letters show with what industry and with what strong preferences he explored it. He disliked St. Peter's and the work of Michelangelo, and after the Coliseum, resorted for immensity and sublimity to the Baths of Caracalla. Amid those ruins in March and April he completed the second and third Act of *Prometheus Unbound*; for he was inspired, and his

¹ Newman Ivey White, *Shelley*, ii. 71.

² Newman Ivey White dismisses this story about the lady as Shelley's fabrication. Dowden accepts it, and it cannot be disproved. Claire in later life told Rossetti that she had seen the lady. White supposes that the child was an adopted one: but why, then, did Shelley not take her into his home? In one of his letters he writes of her as his 'Neapolitan charge'.

poetry in the next ten months was a wonderful harvest. A year previously he had read in a manuscript the history of Beatrice Cenci, and now saw her portrait, said to be by Guido, in the Colonna palace. In May, after visiting the Cenci castle, he began his tragedy. But he was not far on with it when calamity again overtook him. On 7 June, after anxious days and nights, his child William died of a malignant fever, and a few days after, Shelley, with Mary and Claire, left the city and proceeded to Leghorn.

(III) *Leghorn and Florence: from 17 June 1819 to 26 January 1820*

At Leghorn they could see the Gisbornes, and for three months took up quarters in a country house not far from the town. Shelley was the servant of his Muse, and, unlike Mary, could put his sorrow by for hours together. In little more than two months he had brought the tragedy to an end, and wrote eagerly to his friends in London in the vain hope of getting it staged at Covent Garden. Its authorship and not alone its subject may have been against it. For there was enough in his past life to provision his enemies, and a review of *The Revolt of Islam* in the April number of the *Quarterly* brought the fact home to him. The faults of the poem, it declared, were nothing to the impurity of the poet's life, and to his frantic endeavour to stem the waters of truth in which, like Pharaoh in the Red Sea, he would inevitably drown. The thing had been written by John Taylor Coleridge, and not, as he at first supposed, by Southey. But in August 1820,

when Shelley wrote to charge him with it, Southey reproached him with the 'pernicious opinions' that had issued in 'almost irremediable guilt'. In the following year a writer in the *London Literary Gazette*, reviewing a pirated edition of *Queen Mab*, considered its author 'one of the darkest of the fiends'. In 1819 he was a little consoled by Leigh Hunt's warm apology in the *Examiner*, and by three articles in *Blackwood's* that hailed him as a true poet and rebuked the writer in the *Quarterly*. Nevertheless, the feeling that he was a pariah and one who wrote perhaps vainly for posterity called upon him for all the self-sustainment that no enmity could defeat. It was, as he said, 'a poor way of allaying the love within him'.

Early in October they were in Florence, and in the following month Mary gave birth to her son Percy, who was destined in after life to inherit the patrimony that would have been his father's. It was a hard winter, and Shelley was much indoors or in the galleries. The tide of his creative energy was still racing. The state of things in England called forth *The Mask of Anarchy* and the satire on Wordsworth, *Peter Bell the Third*. The third Act of *Prometheus Unbound* demanded a fulfilment, and he now fulfilled it with the glory of the fourth. At the turn of the year he began his *Philosophical View of Reform*, with its sureness of an English revolution and its temperate counsels. And viewing the sculptures in the galleries and 'drinking in the spirit of their forms', he wrote the short *Notes on a few of them that convey to us no less of his own spirit than of theirs.*

(iv) *Pisa and its neighbourhood: from 26 January 1820 to 1 May 1822*

Pisa, where he had come in search of health, was a quiet city, much less populous than in other days. Its white marble palaces and Leaning Tower, the Cathedral, and the cloisters of the Campo Santo told of its bygone glory. But for Shelley there was a stronger charm in the great sunlit plain flanked by the Apennines and the sea, in the often impetuous Arno, and in the nearby forest in which he loved to wander. Four miles to the north were the baths of San Giuliano under wooded hills washed by the Serchio and, as soon as he possessed a boat, the two rivers and the canal that linked them afforded him his happiest hours.

For nearly a year they were solitary and unhappy. The English in the town hated these 'atheists' and one, an army officer, is said to have struck Shelley to the ground on hearing his name. Godwin, in danger of losing his shop, was asking for money, and on Shelley's decision to yield no more to 'implacable exactions' continued to the end of this story upbraiding his benefactor and whining to his daughter. In June, Paolo Foggi, their discarded servant, was giving it out that Shelley and Claire were the parents of the child at Naples, till a lawyer for a time suppressed him. On that account they moved to Leghorn for two of the summer months and, the Gisbornes having departed for London, resided in their house. These anxieties checked the flow of Shelley's powers. The popular rising in Spain in January 1820 and in July the

Neapolitan rising set him writing his prophetic odes *To Liberty* and *To Naples*. In the same month he composed perhaps the most felicitous of all epistles in verse, *A Letter to Maria Gisborne*, describing the Gisborne's Italian home and the friends they would see in London. He made also his sprightly translation of the Homeric *Hymn to Mercury*. And in the autumn, while staying at the Baths, he wrote two things that could hardly be more dissimilar: *Swellfoot the Tyrant*, a satire on George IV and Queen Caroline, and *The Witch of Atlas*, that exquisite myth of the exile in the realm of Time.

When in October they returned to Pisa brighter days set in. They were presently in a circle of friends, English and foreign, and among them Edward Williams, a cavalry officer on half pay, with his wife Jane, he 'the best of good fellows', she 'the anti-type of the lady in *The Sensitive Plant*'. Another acquisition was fortunate for English poetry. Emilia Viviani, the daughter of a noble house, young and beautiful, had been confined in the convent of Santa Anna by a stepmother jealous of her charms and 'pined like a bird in a cage'. The Shelleys were now in frequent contact with her, and the poet and paladin took fire at her beauty and her wrongs. *Epipsychedion*, written early in 1821, is the fantasy in which he sees her as the counterpart of his inmost soul, and an avatar of the transcendent beauty. The charm evaporated, and Shelley remembered it a little ashamedly. 'The error', he wrote, 'consists in seeking in a mortal image the likeness of what is perhaps eternal.' The splendid rhapsody led in a year of achievement as wonderful as 1819. It was

followed in February by the most characteristic and deeply considered of his writings in prose, *A Defence of Poetry*; in April by *Adonais*; in the autumn, on the outbreak of the insurrection in Greece, by the mystical Hellenism of *Hellas*. Further, the years in Italy and especially the years at Pisa, brought forth the best of his shorter lyrics, from the *Ode to the West Wind* to the little pieces that make one thing of sound and sense and distil his melancholy in a handful of notes. Meanwhile, he spent many days of the summer in company with Williams; frequenting the inland waters in a crazy vessel fitted with mast and sail, in the serene and joyous mood of *The Boat on the Serchio*. But his serenity never lasted. In August he visited Byron at Ravenna on an anxious mission. Byron had placed Allegra in the convent of Bagnacavallo in the Romagna against Claire's entreaty and, as he was now intending to move to Geneva, it was her mother's earnest wish that either he would take her with him or put her in a home or an English school. For some days at Ravenna the intimacy between the poets was renewed, and Shelley saw the child at the convent in all her beauty and vivacity. But her father was inflexibly opposed to removing her, nor was this the only painful outcome of the visit. Paolo Foggi had married the Shelleys' nurse Elise, and both had been discarded. She was now his accomplice in calumny, and had told the Hoppners in Venice not only that Shelley and Claire were the parents of the Neapolitan child but that Shelley had hurried her away to a foundling hospital, and had joined with Claire in ill-treating Mary. Thereupon the Hoppners had informed Byron that they would

have no more to do with the perpetrators of so much infamy, asking him at the same time not to tell them of their resolution. But he now blurted it all to Shelley, with the result that Mary wrote a letter intended for the Hoppners that would have convinced them, had they seen it, as it must convince all who read it, that the charge was baseless. Byron received the letter from Shelley and promised to forward it. But a little while before he had written to the Hoppners imputing the parentage to Shelley and Claire, as from his own knowledge, and Mary's passionate denial would have shamed him. Her letter was found in his papers after his death. It had never been forwarded.

The last phase at Pisa began in November when Byron with his seigneurial household moved to the city and settled in the Palazzo Lanfranchi. In the January of 1822 came Edward John Trelawny on purpose to meet Shelley. Trelawny was an adventurer by land and sea and for a time the friend and accomplice of a noted buccaneer. His appearance, 'half Arab and half English', agreed with his antecedents: he was a sort of Ishmael, a law to himself and a man of wrath and scorn. But he could love and revere Shelley and choose after many years to lie in death beside him. In his graphic *Recollections* Shelley has left his aggressive youth behind and has something of Ariel about him, a name that in one of his poems he gave to himself. On arriving at Pisa Trelawny sat talking with the Williamses and saw through the open door 'a pair of glittering eyes'. The eyes were Shelley's, and they asked him to come in:

Swiftly gliding in, blushing like a girl, a tall thin stripling held out both his hands; and although I could hardly believe, as I looked at his flushed, feminine, and artless face, that it could be the poet, I returned his warm pressure.

He was carrying a copy of Calderon's *Magico Prodigioso*, and they asked him to read it.

He instantly became oblivious of everything but the book in his hand. The masterly manner in which he analysed the genius of the author, his lucid interpretation of the story, and the ease with which he translated into our language the most subtle and imaginative passages of the Spanish poet, were marvellous, as was his command of the two languages. After this touch of his quality I no longer doubted his identity; a dead silence ensued; looking up I asked 'Where is he?' Mrs. Williams said, 'Who, Shelley? Oh, he comes and goes like a spirit, no one knows where or when.'

But Trelawny soon found that he had before him not 'a bird of paradise with wings and no legs', but a man whose will, as he declared, was stronger than any he knew. The intrepid Shelley, or the Shelley who could take an effective hand in common life, often meets us at the end of the record. He could be seen stemming the swollen Arno in his little boat. When at Lucca a man was sentenced to be burnt alive for an act of sacrilege he was all on fire to get the English in Pisa to rescue him by force, and had the sentence not been commuted he and others would have made the attempt. He would ride with Byron and his friends to practice pistol-shooting at a place beyond the walls, and was no mean marksman. He almost lost his life when a drunken cavalryman rode into

the company and cut him with his sabre. But this was another period of disquiet. For one thing, Byron's company had become, as he said, 'detestable'. For Byron's poetry his admiration was boundless, and even dismaying when he compared it with his own. Of the man himself he had seen too much. In the April of 1822 Allegra died in the convent in the unwholesome air of the Romagna, and the cold negligence of her father's proceedings with her and her mother was bitter memory in one who had so often interceded for them. There was another root of discontent. For some time Mary's natural reserve had chilled the relation between them, and it sent him to Jane Williams for the sympathy he so much needed. Some of his memorable lyrics, *To Jane: the Recollection*, or *With a Guitar to Jane* breathe the tranquil pleasure of being with her, nor does he ever strike the note of loneliness with the same simple intensity as in the lines beginning,

the Serpent is shut out from Paradise.

But in a very ill wind, such as the behaviour of the Hoppners when for a time the 'pardlike Spirit tameless and proud' would wane like 'a dying lamp' or 'a falling shower', it was Mary he would have by him:

I would retire with you and our child [he wrote to her on that bitter occasion] to a solitary island in the sea and build a boat, and shut upon my retreat the floodgates of the world. . . . There are one or two chosen companions beside yourself whom I should desire. But to this I would not listen—where two or three are gathered together, the devil is among them.

(v) *Lerici: from 1 May to 8 July 1822*

On the first of May the Shelleys and the Williamses moved together to Casa Magni, a small house close to Lerici on the eastern shore of the Gulf of Spezzia. The ground floor was a depot for fishing boats and they occupied the story above it with a veranda looking seaward. The place was enclosed by steep wooded hills, and there was beauty in every prospect. In a fortnight the boat built for Shelley at Genoa came to hand; and they named her *Ariel* and never tired of her. She was thirty feet in length, undecked, schooner-rigged, and 'fetched whatever she looked at'. Day by day they were aboard out at sea or close inshore. Shelley was never happier or in better health than on many of these days. But his nervous instability had not left him. He was troubled with visionary terrors, on one occasion with the shade of Allegra, and on another with his own shade confronting him in the daylight. He wrote asking Trelawny to send him poison, not, as he said, intending its immediate use, but wishing to have by him 'that key to the golden chamber of perpetual rest'. On Mary, who but for his care of her would have died of a dangerous miscarriage, the loneliness and even the loveliness of the place lay like an ill-boding dream, and she more than once recalled him when on 1 July he left her for the last time. On that day, in company with Williams and their sailor servant Vivian, he put out for Leghorn in order to meet Leigh Hunt. Hunt had come from England to join with Byron in producing a new quarterly, the *Liberal*, for the advancement of

political freedom and critical thought. (It was a precarious venture, that carried *The Vision of Judgment* in the first number and came to grief in the fourth.) For a few days the two old friends were together at Pisa, while Hunt installed his family at the Palazzo Lanfranchi. In the afternoon of the 8th Shelley, Williams, and the sailor put out to sea from the harbour of Leghorn intending to make Lerici by nightfall. A long spell of heat was evidently breaking and the horizon overcast. Ten miles out at sea they were struck by a furious storm, and Trelawny, watching from Byron's yacht *The Boliver*, lost sight of them in darkness. On the 11th Shelley's body was washed up on the shore near Via Reggio. In the jacket that still enfolded it were a volume of Sophocles in one pocket and in another a volume of Keats doubled back evidently in haste. The body of Williams had already been recovered, and on 15 August was burnt upon the strand. On the next day Shelley's was burnt in the presence of Trelawny, Byron, and Leigh Hunt. The Protestant cemetery in Rome, where he had buried his own child, and where the dust of Keats reposed, was dear to him, and one of his letters and a stanza in *Adonais* speak of its beauty and its peace. Here, in a recess of the ancient wall under the pyramidal monument to Caius Cestius, Trelawny bought a plot of ground sufficient for two graves, one that should be his own and the other for the ashes of Shelley, and here he laid them. On the stone are three lines from *The Tempest* that begin with 'Nothing of him that doth fade', and the words *Cor Cordeum*.

The great fragment of *The Triumph of Life*, written

mainly at Lerici, is his sternest and saddest judgement on humanity at large and implicitly on himself. It is a vision in which Life, a figure of terrible deformity, drives her car on a dusty road in the centre of a valley, while the multitudes of mankind, maddened by its cold effulgence, whirl around it in a maenadic dance, and a train of great sages and rulers march in chains behind it. Life is the cruel force of inordinate desire or vain idolatry that comes on all who are born into the world and prevails upon nearly all. As it prevails it deludes them with false appearances of the good that each man seeks, and they are carried along in 'the valley of perpetual dream' in which the false light puts out the true. It is Shelley's faith that at death, when the Triumph will come to an end, the dreamers, or as many of them as are not quelled by it, will awake in the noonday, and that there are those in the meanwhile over whom it has no power. In the vision a Shape all light from the kingdom of the Sun glides by the sad procession intent, as we may conjecture, on the eventual rescue, and Christ and Socrates are not among the captives nor in the valley at all. Shelley, the lover and the visionary, had hungered all his days for the unattainable and wearied himself by 'seeking in a mortal image the likeness of what is perhaps eternal'. He had made his high demands on the nature of things and paid for the error.

The wise want love and those who love want wisdom.

To Socrates and to Christ he had consistently looked up as to the masters who had 'fitted their infinitude to the finite' and lived serenely in a world inimical to them, but

he had never been as conscious of their authority as now. It may well be that, as many have supposed, a new and fruitful orientation lay before him when he died, and that, notwithstanding his splendid achievement, he also is among 'the inheritors of unfulfilled renown'.

PROMETHEUS UNBOUND

A LYRICAL DRAMA

IN FOUR ACTS

WITH OTHER POEMS

BY

PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY

AUDISNE HEC, AMPHIARAE, SUB TERRAM ABDITE !

LONDON

C AND J OLLIER VERE STREET BOND STREET

1820

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PREFACE.

THE Greek tragic writers, in selecting as their subject any portion of their national history or mythology, employed in their treatment of it a certain arbitrary discretion. They by no means conceived themselves bound to adhere to the common interpretation or to imitate in story as in title their rivals and predecessors. Such a system would have amounted to a resignation of those claims to preference over their competitors which incited the composition. The Agamemnonian story was exhibited on the Athenian theatre with as many variations as dramas.

I have presumed to employ a similar licence. The *Prometheus Unbound* of Aeschylus supposed the reconciliation of Jupiter with his victim as the price of the disclosure of the danger threatened to his empire by the consummation of his marriage with Thetis. Thetis, according to this view of the subject, was given in marriage to Peleus, and Prometheus, by the permission of Jupiter, delivered from his captivity by Hercules. Had I framed my story on this model, I should have done no more than have attempted to restore the lost drama of Aeschylus; an ambition which, if my preference to this mode of treating the subject had incited me to cherish, the recollection of the high comparison such an attempt would challenge might well abate. But, in truth, I was averse from a catastrophe so feeble as that of reconciling the Champion with the Oppressor of mankind. The moral interest of the fable, which is so powerfully sustained by the sufferings and endurance of Prometheus, would be annihilated if we could conceive

of him as unsaying his high language and quailing before his successful and perfidious adversary. The only imaginary being resembling in any degree Prometheus, is Satan ; and Prometheus is, in my judgement, a more poetical character than Satan, because, in addition to courage, and majesty, and firm and patient opposition to omnipotent force, he is susceptible of being described as exempt from the taints of ambition, envy, revenge, and a desire for personal aggrandisement, which, in the Hero of *Paradise Lost*, interfere with the interest. The character of Satan engenders in the mind a pernicious casuistry which leads us to weigh his faults with his wrongs, and to excuse the former because the latter exceed all measure. In the minds of those who consider that magnificent fiction with a religious feeling it engenders something worse. But Prometheus is, as it were, the type of the highest perfection of moral and intellectual nature, impelled by the purest and the truest motives to the best and noblest ends.

This Poem was chiefly written upon the mountainous ruins of the Baths of Caracalla, among the flowery glades, and thickets of odoriferous blossoming trees, which are extended in ever winding labyrinths upon its immense platforms and dizzy arches suspended in the air. The bright blue sky of Rome, and the effect of the vigorous awakening spring in that divinest climate, and the new life with which it drenches the spirits even to intoxication, were the inspiration of this drama.

The imagery which I have employed will be found, in many instances, to have been drawn from the operations of the human mind, or from those external actions by which they are expressed. This is unusual in modern poetry, although Dante and Shakespeare are full of instances of the same kind : Dante indeed more than any other poet, and with greater success. But the Greek poets, as writers to whom no resource of awakening the sympathy of their contemporaries was unknown, were in

the habitual use of this power ; and it is the study of their works (since a higher merit would probably be denied me) to which I am willing that my readers should impute this singularity.

One word is due in candour to the degree in which the study of contemporary writings may have tinged my composition, for such has been a topic of censure with regard to poems far more popular, and indeed more deservedly popular, than mine. It is impossible that any one who inhabits the same age with such writers as those who stand in the foremost ranks of our own, can conscientiously assure himself that his language and tone of thought may not have been modified by the study of the productions of those extraordinary intellects. It is true, that, not the spirit of their genius, but the forms in which it has manifested itself, are due less to the peculiarities of their own minds than to the peculiarity of the moral and intellectual condition of the minds among which they have been produced. Thus a number of writers possess the form, whilst they want the spirit of those whom, it is alleged, they imitate ; because the former is the endowment of the age in which they live, and the latter must be the uncommunicated lightning of their own mind.

The peculiar style of intense and comprehensive imagery which distinguishes the modern literature of England, has not been, as a general power, the product of the imitation of any particular writer. The mass of capabilities remains at every period materially the same ; the circumstances which awaken it to action perpetually change. If England were divided into forty republics, each equal in population and extent to Athens, there is no reason to suppose but that, under institutions not more perfect than those of Athens, each would produce philosophers and poets equal to those who (if we except Shakespeare) have never been surpassed. We owe the great writers of the golden age of our literature to that

fervid awakening of the public mind which shook to dust the oldest and most oppressive form of the Christian religion. We owe Milton to the progress and development of the same spirit: the sacred Milton was, let it ever be remembered, a republican, and a bold inquirer into morals and religion. The great writers of our own age are, we have reason to suppose, the companions and forerunners of some unimagined change in our social condition or the opinions which cement it. The cloud of mind is discharging its collected lightning, and the equilibrium between institutions and opinions is now restoring, or is about to be restored.

As to imitation, poetry is a mimetic art. It creates, but it creates by combination and representation. Poetical abstractions are beautiful and new, not because the portions of which they are composed had no previous existence in the mind of man or in nature, but because the whole produced by their combination has some intelligible and beautiful analogy with those sources of emotion and thought, and with the contemporary condition of them: one great poet is a masterpiece of nature which another not only ought to study but must study. He might as wisely and as easily determine that his mind should no longer be the mirror of all that is lovely in the visible universe, as exclude from his contemplation the beautiful which exists in the writings of a great contemporary. The pretence of doing it would be a presumption in any but the greatest; the effect, even in him, would be strained, unnatural, and ineffectual. A poet is the combined product of such internal powers as modify the nature of others; and of such external influences as excite and sustain these powers; he is not one, but both. Every man's mind is, in this respect, modified by all the objects of nature and art; by every word and every suggestion which he ever admitted to act upon his consciousness; it is the mirror upon which all forms are reflected, and in which they compose one

form. Poets, not otherwise than philosophers, painters, sculptors, and musicians, are, in one sense, the creators, and, in another, the creations, of their age. From this subjection the loftiest do not escape. There is a similarity between Homer and Hesiod, between Æschylus and Euripides, between Virgil and Horace, between Dante and Petrarch, between Shakespeare and Fletcher, between Dryden and Pope; each has a generic resemblance under which their specific distinctions are arranged. If this similarity be the result of imitation, I am willing to confess that I have imitated.

Let this opportunity be conceded to me of acknowledging that I have, what a Scotch philosopher characteristically terms, 'a passion for reforming the world:' what passion incited him to write and publish his book, he omits to explain. For my part I had rather be damned with Plato and Lord Bacon, than go to Heaven with Paley and Malthus. But it is a mistake to suppose that I dedicate my poetical compositions solely to the direct enforcement of reform, or that I consider them in any degree as containing a reasoned system on the theory of human life. Didactic poetry is my abhorrence; nothing can be equally well expressed in prose that is not tedious and supererogatory in verse. My purpose has hitherto been simply to familiarise the highly refined imagination of the more select classes of poetical readers with beautiful idealisms of moral excellence; aware that until the mind can love, and admire, and trust, and hope, and endure, reasoned principles of moral conduct are seeds cast upon the highway of life which the unconscious passenger tramples into dust, although they would bear the harvest of his happiness. Should I live to accomplish what I purpose, that is, produce a systematical history of what appear to me to be the genuine elements of human society, let not the advocates of injustice and superstition flatter themselves that I should take Æschylus rather than Plato as my model.

The having spoken of myself with unaffected freedom will need little apology with the candid ; and let the uncandid consider that they injure me less than their own hearts and minds by misrepresentation. Whatever talents a person may possess to amuse and instruct others, be they ever so inconsiderable, he is yet bound to exert them : if his attempt be ineffectual, let the punishment of an unaccomplished purpose have been sufficient ; let none trouble themselves to heap the dust of oblivion upon his efforts ; the pile they raise will betray his grave which might otherwise have been unknown.

PROMETHEUS UNBOUND.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

PROMETHEUS.

DEMOGORGON.

JUPITER.

THE EARTH.

OCEAN.

APOLLO.

MERCURY.

ASIA

PANTHEA }
IONE } Oceanides.

HERCULES.

THE PHANTASM OF JUPITER.

THE SPIRIT OF THE EARTH.

THE SPIRIT OF THE MOON.

SPIRITS OF THE HOURS.

SPIRITS. ECHOES. FAUNS.

FURIES.

PROMETHEUS UNBOUND.

ACT I.

SCENE.—*A Ravine of Icy Rocks in the Indian Caucasus.*

PROMETHEUS is discovered bound to the Precipice.

PANTHEA and IONE are seated at his feet. Time, night. During the Scene, morning slowly breaks.

PROMETHEUS. Monarch of Gods and Dæmons, and all Spirits

But One, who throng those bright and rolling worlds
Which Thou and I alone of living things
Behold with sleepless eyes ! regard this Earth
Made multitudinous with thy slaves, whom thou
Requistest for knee-worship, prayer, and praise,
And toil, and hecatombs of broken hearts,
With fear and self-contempt and barren hope.
Whilst me, who am thy foe, eyeless in hate,
Hast thou made reign and triumph, to thy scorn,
O'er mine own misery and thy vain revenge.
Three thousand years of sleep-unsheltered hours,
And moments aye divided by keen pangs
Till they seemed years, torture and solitude,
Scorn and despair,—these are mine empire :—
More glorious far than that which thou surveyest
From thine unenvied throne, O Mighty God !
Almighty, had I deigned to share the shame
Of thine ill tyranny, and hung not here

Nailed to this wall of eagle-baffling mountain,
Black, wintry, dead, unmeasured ; without herb,
Insect, or beast, or shape or sound of life.
Ah me ! alas, pain, pain ever, for ever !

20

No change, no pause, no hope ! Yet I endure.
I ask the Earth, have not the mountains felt ?
I ask yon Heaven, the all-beholding Sun,
Has it not seen ? The Sea, in storm or calm,
Heaven's ever-changing Shadow, spread below,
Have its deaf waves not heard my agony ?
Ah me ! alas, pain, pain ever, for ever !

30

The crawling glaciers pierce me with the spears
Of their moon-freezing crystals, the bright chains
Eat with their burning cold into my bones.
Heaven's wingèd hound, polluting from thy lips
His beak in poison not his own, tears up
My heart ; and shapeless sights come wandering by,
The ghastly people of the realm of dream,
Mocking me : and the Earthquake-fiends are charged
To wrench the rivets from my quivering wounds
When the rocks split and close again behind :
While from their loud abysses howling throng
The genii of the storm, urging the rage
Of whirlwind, and afflict me with keen hail.
And yet to me welcome is day and night,
Whether one breaks the hoar frost of the morn,
Or starry, dim, and slow, the other climbs
The leaden-coloured east ; for then they lead
The wingless, crawling hours, one among whom

40

—As some dark Priest hales the reluctant victim—
Shall drag thee, cruel King, to kiss the blood 50
From these pale feet, which then might trample thee
If they disdained not such a prostrate slave.
Disdain ! Ah no ! I pity thee. What ruin
Will hunt thee undefended through wide Heaven !
How will thy soul, cloven to its depth with terror,
Gape like a hell within ! I speak in grief,
Not exultation, for I hate no more,
As then ere misery made me wise. The curse
Once breathed on thee I would recall. Ye Mountains,
Whose many-voicèd Echoes, through the mist 60
Of cataracts, flung the thunder of that spell !
Ye icy Springs, stagnant with wrinkling frost,
Which vibrated to hear me, and then crept
Shuddering through India ! Thou serenest Air,
Through which the Sun walks burning without beams !
And ye swift Whirlwinds, who on poisèd wings
Hung mute and moveless o'er yon hushed abyss,
As thunder, louder than your own, made rock
The orbèd world ! If then my words had power,
Though I am changed so that aught evil wish 70
Is dead within ; although no memory be
Of what is hate, let them not lose it now !
What was that curse ? for ye all heard me speak.

FIRST VOICE (from the Mountains).

Thrice three hundred thousand years
O'er the Earthquake's couch we stood :
Oft, as men convulsed with fears,
We trembled in our multitude.

SECOND VOICE (*from the Springs*).

Thunderbolts had parched our water,
 We had been stained with bitter blood,
 And had run mute, 'mid shrieks of slaughter, 80
 Thro' a city and a solitude.

THIRD VOICE (*from the Air*).

I had clothed, since Earth uprose,
 Its wastes in colours not their own,
 And oft had my serene repose
 Been cloven by many a rending groan.

FOURTH VOICE (*from the Whirlwinds*).

We had soared beneath these mountains
 Unresting ages ; nor had thunder,
 Nor yon volcano's flaming fountains,
 Nor any power above or under 90
 Ever made us mute with wonder.

FIRST VOICE.

But never bowed our snowy crest
 As at the voice of thine unrest.

SECOND VOICE.

Never such a sound before
 To the Indian waves we bore.
 A pilot asleep on the howling sea
 Leaped up from the deck in agony,
 And heard, and cried, ' Ah, woe is me ! '
 And died as mad as the wild waves be.

THIRD VOICE.

By such dread words from Earth to Heaven
 My still realm was never riven : 100

When its wound was closed, there stood
Darkness o'er the day like blood.

FOURTH VOICE.

And we shrank back : for dreams of ruin
To frozen caves our flight pursuing
Made us keep silence—thus—and thus—
Though silence is as hell to us.

THE EARTH. The tongueless Caverns of the craggy
hills

Cried, ‘ Misery ! ’ then ; the hollow Heaven replied,
‘ Misery ! ’ And the Ocean’s purple waves,
Climbing the land, howled to the lashing winds, 110
And the pale nations heard it, ‘ Misery ! ’

PROMETHEUS. I heard a sound of voices : not the
voice

Which I gave forth. Mother, thy sons and thou
Scorn him, without whose all-enduring will
Beneath the fierce omnipotence of Jove,
Both they and thou had vanished, like thin mist
Unrolled on the morning wind. Know ye not me,
The Titan ? He who made his agony
The barrier to your else all-conquering foe ?
Oh, rock-embosomed lawns, and snow-fed streams, 120
Now seen athwart frore vapours, deep below,
Through whose o’ershadowing woods I wandered once
With Asia, drinking life from her loved eyes ;
Why scorns the spirit which informs ye, now
To commune with me ? me alone, who checked,
As one who checks a fiend-drawn charioteer,
The falsehood and the force of him who reigns

Supreme, and with the groans of pining slaves
Fills your dim glens and liquid wildernesses : 129
Why answer ye not, still ? Brethren !

THE EARTH. They dare not.

PROMETHEUS. Who dares? for I would hear that curse again.

Ha, what an awful whisper rises up !

'Tis scarce like sound : it tingles through the frame
As lightning tingles, hovering ere it strike.

Speak, Spirit ! from thine inorganic voice

I only know that thou art moving near

And love. How cursed I him ?

THE EARTH

THE EARTH. How canst thou hear

Who knowest not the language of the dead ?

PROMETHEUS. Thou art a living spirit ; speak as they.

THE EARTH. I dare not speak like life, lest Heaven's
 fell King 140

Should hear, and link me to some wheel of pain

More torturing than the one whereon I roll.

Subtle thou art and good, and though the Gods

Hear not this voice, yet thou art more than God.

ing wise and kind : earnestly hearken now.
Prometheus. Obscurely through my brain, like shadows
dim

Sweep awful thoughts, rapid and thick. I feel

Faint, like one mingled in entwining love :

Yet 'tis not pleasure.

The Earth. No, thou canst not hear;

Thou art immortal, and this tongue is known

Only to those who die.

Prometheus. And what art thou,

O, melancholy Voice ?

The Earth. I am the Earth,
Thy mother ; she within whose stony veins,
To the last fibre of the loftiest tree
Whose thin leaves trembled in the frozen air,
Joy ran, as blood within a living frame,
When thou didst from her bosom, like a cloud
Of glory, arise, a spirit of keen joy !
And at thy voice her pining sons uplifted
Their prostrate brows from the polluting dust, 160
And our almighty Tyrant with fierce dread
Grew pale, until his thunder chained thee here.
Then, see those million worlds which burn and roll
Around us : their inhabitants beheld
My spherèd light wane in wide Heaven ; the sea
Was lifted by strange tempest, and new fire
From earthquake-rifted mountains of bright snow
Shook its portentous hair beneath Heaven's frown ;
Lightning and Inundation vexed the plains ;
Blue thistles bloomed in cities ; foodless toads 170
Within voluptuous chambers panting crawled :
When Plague had fallen on man, and beast, and worm,
And Famine ; and black blight on herb and tree ;
And in the corn, and vines, and meadow-grass,
Teemed ineradicable poisonous weeds
Draining their growth, for my wan breast was dry
With grief ; and the thin air, my breath, was stained
With the contagion of a mother's hate
Breathed on her child's destroyer ; ay, I heard
Thy curse, the which, if thou rememberest not, 180
Yet my innumerable seas and streams,

Mountains, and caves, and winds, and yon wide air,
 And the inarticulate people of the dead,
 Preserve, a treasured spell. We meditate
 In secret joy and hope those dreadful words,
 But dare not speak them.

PROMETHEUS. Venerable mother !
 All else who live and suffer take from thee
 Some comfort ; flowers, and fruits, and happy sounds,
 And love, though fleeting ; these may not be mine.
 But mine own words, I pray, deny me not. 190

THE EARTH. They shall be told. Ere Babylon was
 dust,
 The Magus Zoroaster, my dead child,
 Met his own image walking in the garden.
 That apparition, sole of men, he saw.
 For know there are two worlds of life and death :
 One that which thou beholdest ; but the other
 Is underneath the grave, where do inhabit
 The shadows of all forms that think and live
 Till death unite them and they part no more ;
 Dreams and the light imaginings of men, 200
 And all that faith creates or love desires,
 Terrible, strange, sublime and beauteous shapes.
 There thou art, and dost hang, a writhing shade,
 'Mid whirlwind-peopled mountains ; all the gods
 Are there, and all the powers of nameless worlds,
 Vast, sceptred phantoms ; heroes, men, and beasts ;
 And Demogorgon, a tremendous gloom ;
 And he, the supreme Tyrant, on his throne
 Of burning gold. Son, one of these shall utter
 The curse which all remember. Call at will 210

Thine own ghost, or the ghost of Jupiter,
 Hades or Typhon, or what mightier Gods
 From all-prolific Evil, since thy ruin
 Have sprung, and trampled on my prostrate sons.
 Ask, and they must reply : so the revenge
 Of the Supreme may sweep through vacant shades,
 As rainy wind through the abandoned gate
 Of a fallen palace.

PROMETHEUS. Mother, let not aught
 Of that which may be evil pass again
 My lips, or those of aught resembling me.
 Phantasm of Jupiter, arise, appear !

220

IONE.

My wings are folded o'er mine ears :
 My wings are crossèd o'er mine eyes :
 Yet through their silver shade appears,
 And through their lulling plumes arise,
 A Shape, a throng of sounds ;
 May it be no ill to thee
 O thou of many wounds !
 Near whom, for our sweet sister's sake,
 Ever thus we watch and wake.

230

PANTHEA.

The sound is of whirlwind underground,
 Earthquake, and fire, and mountains cloven ;
 The shape is awful like the sound,
 Clothed in dark purple, star-inwoven.
 A sceptre of pale gold
 To stay steps proud, o'er the slow cloud
 His veinèd hand doth hold.

Cruel he looks, but calm and strong,
Like one who does, not suffers wrong.

PHANTASM OF JUPITER. Why have the secret powers
of this strange world 240

Driven me, a frail and empty phantom, hither
On direst storms ? What unaccustomed sounds
Are hovering on my lips, unlike the voice
With which our pallid race hold ghastly talk
In darkness ? And, proud sufferer, who art thou ?

PROMETHEUS. Tremendous Image, as thou art must be
He whom thou shadowest forth. I am his foe,
The Titan. Speak the words which I would hear,
Although no thought inform thine empty voice.

THE EARTH. Listen ! And though your echoes must
be mute, 250

Gray mountains, and old woods, and haunted springs,
Prophetic caves, and isle-surrounding streams,
Rejoice to hear what yet ye cannot speak.

PHANTASM. A spirit seizes me and speaks within :
It tears me as fire tears a thunder-cloud.

PANTHEA. See, how he lifts his mighty looks, the
Heaven

Darkens above.

IONE. He speaks ! O shelter me !

PROMETHEUS. I see the curse on gestures proud and
cold,

And looks of firm defiance, and calm hate,
And such despair as mocks itself with smiles, 260
Written as on a scroll : yet speak : Oh, speak !

PHANTASM.

Fiend, I defy thee ! with a calm, fixed mind,
All that thou canst inflict I bid thee do ;
Foul Tyrant both of Gods and Human-kind,
One only being shalt thou not subdue.

Rain then thy plagues upon me here,
Ghastly disease, and frenzyng fear ;
And let alternate frost and fire
Eat into me, and be thine ire

Lightning, and cutting hail, and legioned forms 270
Of furies, driving by upon the wounding storms.

Ay, do thy worst. Thou art omnipotent.

O'er all things but thyself I gave thee power,
And my own will. Be thy swift mischiefs sent
To blast mankind, from yon ethereal tower.

Let thy malignant spirit move
In darkness over those I love :
On me and mine I imprecate
The utmost torture of thy hate ;

And thus devote to sleepless agony, 280
This undeclining head while thou must reign on high.

But thou, who art the God and Lord : O, thou,
Who fillest with thy soul this world of woe,
To whom all things of Earth and Heaven do bow
In fear and worship : all-prevailing foe !
I curse thee ! let a sufferer's curse
Clasp thee, his torturer, like remorse ;
Till thine Infinity shall be
A robe of envenomed agony ;

And thine Omnipotence a crown of pain, 290
 To cling like burning gold round thy dissolving brain.

Heap on thy soul, by virtue of this Curse,
 Ill deeds, then be thou damned, beholding good ;
 Both infinite as is the universe,
 And thou, and thy self-torturing solitude.
 An awful image of calm power
 Though now thou sittest, let the hour
 Come, when thou must appear to be
 That which thou art internally ;
 And after many a false and fruitless crime 300
 Scorn track thy lagging fall through boundless space
 and time.

PROMETHEUS. Were these my words, O Parent ?

THE EARTH. They were thine.

PROMETHEUS. It doth repent me : words are quick and
 vain ;

Grief for awhile is blind, and so was mine.

I wish no living thing to suffer pain.

THE EARTH.

Misery, Oh misery to me,
 That Jove at length should vanquish thee.
 Wail, howl aloud, Land and Sea,
 The Earth's rent heart shall answer ye.

Howl, Spirits of the living and the dead, 310
 Your refuge, your defence lies fallen and vanquishèd.

FIRST ECHO.

Lies fallen and vanquishèd !

SECOND ECHO.
Fallen and vanquished !

IONE.

Fear not : 'tis but some passing spasm,
The Titan is unvanquished still.
But see, where through the azure chasm
Of yon forked and snowy hill
Trampling the slant winds on high
With golden-sandalled feet, that glow
Under plumes of purple dye,
Like rose-ensanguined ivory,
A Shape comes now,
Stretching on high from his right hand
A serpent-cinctured wand.

320

PANTHEA. 'Tis Jove's world-wandering herald, Mercury.

IONE.

And who are those with hydra tresses
And iron wings that climb the wind,
Whom the frowning God represses
Like vapours steaming up behind,
Clanging loud, an endless crowd—

330

PANTHEA.

These are Jove's tempest-walking hounds,
Whom he gluts with groans and blood,
When charioted on sulphurous cloud
He bursts Heaven's bounds.

IONE.

Are they now led, from the thin dead
On new pangs to be fed ?

PANTHEA.

The Titan looks as ever, firm, not proud.

FIRST FURY. Ha ! I scent life !

SECOND FURY. Let me but look into his eyes !

THIRD FURY. The hope of torturing him smells like
a heap

Of corpses, to a death-bird after battle.

340

FIRST FURY. Darest thou delay, O Herald ! take
cheer, Hounds

Of Hell : what if the Son of Maia soon
Should make us food and sport—who can please long
The Omnipotent ?

MERCURY. Back to your towers of iron,
And gnash, beside the streams of fire and wail,
Your foodless teeth. Geryon, arise ! and Gorgon,
Chimæra, and thou Sphinx, subtlest of fiends
Who ministered to Thebes Heaven's poisoned wine,
Unnatural love, and more unnatural hate :
These shall perform your task.

FIRST FURY. Oh, mercy ! mercy ! 350
We die with our desire : drive us not back !

MERCURY. Crouch then in silence.

Awful Sufferer !

To thee unwilling, most unwillingly
I come, by the great Father's will driven down,
To execute a doom of new revenge.
Alas ! I pity thee, and hate myself

That I can do no more : aye from thy sight
Returning, for a season, Heaven seems Hell,
So thy worn form pursues me night and day,
Smiling reproach. Wise art thou, firm and good, 360
But vainly wouldest stand forth alone in strife
Against the Omnipotent ; as yon clear lamps
That measure and divide the weary years
From which there is no refuge, long have taught
And long must teach. Even now thy Torturer arms
With the strange might of unimagined pains
The powers who scheme slow agonies in Hell,
And my commission is to lead them here,
Or what more subtle, foul, or savage fiends
People the abyss, and leave them to their task. 370
Be it not so ! there is a secret known
To thee, and to none else of living things,
Which may transfer the sceptre of wide Heaven,
The fear of which perplexes the Supreme :
Clothe it in words, and bid it clasp his throne
In intercession ; bend thy soul in prayer,
And like a suppliant in some gorgeous fane,
Let the will kneel within thy haughty heart :
For benefits and meek submission tame
The fiercest and the mightiest.

PROMETHEUS.

Evil minds

380

Change good to their own nature. I gave all
He has ; and in return he chains me here
Years, ages, night and day : whether the Sun
Split my parched skin, or in the moony night
The crystal-wingèd snow cling round my hair :
Whilst my beloved race is trampled down

By his thought-executing ministers.
 Such is the tyrant's recompense : 'tis just :
 He who is evil can receive no good ;
 And for a world bestowed, or a friend lost, 390
 He can feel hate, fear, shame ; not gratitude :
 He but requites me for his own misdeed.
 Kindness to such is keen reproach, which breaks
 With bitter stings the light sleep of Revenge.
 Submission, thou dost know I cannot try :
 For what submission but that fatal word,
 The death-seal of mankind's captivity,
 Like the Sicilian's hair-suspended sword,
 Which trembles o'er his crown, would he accept,
 Or could I yield ? Which yet I will not yield. 400
 Let others flatter Crime, where it sits throned
 In brief Omnipotence : secure are they :
 For Justice, when triumphant, will weep down
 Pity, not punishment, on her own wrongs,
 Too much avenged by those who err. I wait,
 Enduring thus, the retributive hour
 Which since we spake is even nearer now.
 But hark, the hell-hounds clamour : fear delay :
 Behold ! Heaven lowers under thy Father's frown.

MERCURY. Oh, that we might be spared : I to inflict
 And thou to suffer ! Once more answer me : 411
 Thou knowest not the period of Jove's power ?

PROMETHEUS. I know but this, that it must come.

MERCURY. Alas !

Thou canst not count thy years to come of pain ?

PROMETHEUS. They last while Jove must reign : nor
 more, nor less

Do I desire or fear.

MERCURY. Yet pause, and plunge
Into Eternity, where recorded time,
Even all that we imagine, age on age,
Seems but a point, and the reluctant mind
Flags wearily in its unending flight, 420
Till it sink, dizzy, blind, lost, shelterless ;
Perchance it has not numbered the slow years
Which thou must spend in torture, unrerieved ?

PROMETHEUS. Perchance no thought can count them,
yet they pass.

MERCURY. If thou might'st dwell among the Gods the
while

Lapped in voluptuous joy ?

PROMETHEUS. I would not quit
This bleak ravine, these unrepentant pains.

MERCURY. Alas ! I wonder at, yet pity thee.

PROMETHEUS. Pity the self-despising slaves of Heaven,
Not me, within whose mind sits peace serene, 430
As light in the sun, throned : how vain is talk !
Call up the fiends.

IONE. O, sister, look ! White fire
Has cloven to the roots yon huge snow-loaded cedar ;
How fearfully God's thunder howls behind !

MERCURY. I must obey his words and thine : alas !
Most heavily remorse hangs at my heart !

PANTHEA. See where the child of Heaven, with
wingèd feet,
Runs down the slanted sunlight of the dawn.

IONE. Dear sister, close thy plumes over thine eyes
Lest thou behold and die : they come : they come 440

Blackening the birth of day with countless wings,
And hollow underneath, like death.

FIRST FURY.

Prometheus !

SECOND FURY. Immortal Titan !

THIRD FURY. Champion of Heaven's slaves !

PROMETHEUS. He whom some dreadful voice invokes
is here,

Prometheus, the chained Titan. Horrible forms,
What and who are ye ? Never yet there came
Phantasms so foul through monster-teeming Hell
From the all-miscreative brain of Jove ;
Whilst I behold such execrable shapes
Methinks I grow like what I contemplate, 450
And laugh and stare in loathsome sympathy.

FIRST FURY. We are the ministers of pain, and fear,
And disappointment, and mistrust, and hate,
And clinging crime ; and as lean dogs pursue
Through wood and lake some struck and sobbing fawn,
We track all things that weep, and bleed, and live,
When the great King betrays them to our will.

PROMETHEUS. Oh ! many fearful natures in one name,
I know ye ; and these lakes and echoes know
The darkness and the clangour of your wings. 460
But why more hideous than your loathèd selves
Gather ye up in legions from the deep ?

SECOND FURY. We knew not that : Sisters, rejoice,
rejoice !

PROMETHEUS. Can aught exult in its deformity ?

SECOND FURY. The beauty of delight makes lovers
glad,

Gazing on one another : so are we.

As from the rose which the pale priestess kneels
To gather for her festal crown of flowers
The aëreal crimson falls, flushing her cheek,
So from our victim's destined agony 470
The shade which is our form invests us round,
Else we are shapeless as our mother Night.

PROMETHEUS. I laugh your power, and his who sent
you here,
To lowest scorn. Pour forth the cup of pain.

FIRST FURY. Thou thinkest we will rend thee bone
from bone,
And nerve from nerve, working like fire within ?

PROMETHEUS. Pain is my element, as hate is thine ;
Ye rend me now : I care not.

SECOND FURY. Dost imagine
We will but laugh into thy lidless eyes ?

PROMETHEUS. I weigh not what ye do, but what ye
suffer, 480
Being evil. Cruel was the power which called
You, or aught else so wretched, into light.

THIRD FURY. Thou think'st we will live through thee,
one by one,
Like animal life, and though we can obscure not
The soul which burns within, that we will dwell
Beside it, like a vain loud multitude
Vexing the self-content of wisest men :
That we will be dread thought beneath thy brain,
And foul desire round thine astonished heart,
And blood within thy labyrinthine veins 490
Crawling like agony ?

PROMETHEUS. Why, ye are thus now ;

Yet am I king over myself, and rule
 The torturing and conflicting throngs within,
 As Jove rules you when Hell grows mutinous.

CHORUS OF FURIES.

From the ends of the earth, from the ends of the earth,
 Where the night has its grave and the morning its birth,
 Come, come, come !

Oh, ye who shake hills with the scream of your mirth,
 When cities sink howling in ruin ; and ye
 Who with wingless footsteps trample the sea, 500
 And close upon Shipwreck and Famine's track,
 Sit chattering with joy on the foodless wreck ;

Come, come, come !

Leave the bed, low, cold, and red,
 Strewed beneath a nation dead ;
 Leave the hatred, as in ashes

Fire is left for future burning :

It will burst in bloodier flashes

When ye stir it, soon returning :

Leave the self-contempt implanted 510
 In young spirits, sense-enchanted,

Misery's yet unkindled fuel :

Leave Hell's secrets half uncharted

To the maniac dreamer ; cruel

More than ye can be with hate

Is he with fear.

Come, come, come !

We are steaming up from Hell's wide gate
 And we burthen the blast of the atmosphere,
 But vainly we toil till ye come here.

520

IONE. Sister, I hear the thunder of new wings.

PANTHEA. These solid mountains quiver with the sound
Even as the tremulous air : their shadows make
The space within my plumes more black than night.

FIRST FURY.

Your call was as a wingèd car
Driven on whirlwinds fast and far ;
It rapt us from red gulfs of war.

SECOND FURY.

From wide cities, famine-wasted ;

THIRD FURY.

Groans, half heard, and blood untasted ;

FOURTH FURY.

Kingly conclaves stern and cold, 530
Where blood with gold is bought and sold ;

FIFTH FURY.

From the furnace, white and hot,
In which—

A FURY.

Speak not : whisper not :
I know all that ye would tell,
But to speak might break the spell
Which must bend the Invincible,
The stern of thought ;
He yet defies the deepest power of Hell.

A FURY.

Tear the veil !

ANOTHER FURY.

It is torn.

CHORUS.

The pale stars of the morn
 Shine on a misery, dire to be borne. 540
 Dost thou faint, mighty Titan ? We laugh thee to scorn.
 Dost thou boast the clear knowledge thou waken'dst for
 man ?

Then was kindled within him a thirst which outran
 Those perishing waters ; a thirst of fierce fever,
 Hope, love, doubt, desire, which consume him for ever.

One came forth of gentle worth
 Smiling on the sanguine earth ;
 His words outlived him, like swift poison
 Withering up truth, peace, and pity.

Look ! where round the wide horizon 550

Many a million-peopled city
 Vomits smoke in the bright air.

Hark that outcry of despair !

'Tis his mild and gentle ghost
 Wailing for the faith he kindled :

Look again, the flames almost

To a glow-worm's lamp have dwindled :

The survivors round the embers

Gather in dread.

Joy, joy, joy !

Past ages crowd on thee, but each one remembers.

560

And the future is dark, and the present is spread
Like a pillow of thorns for thy slumberless head.

SEMICHORUS I.

Drops of bloody agony flow
From his white and quivering brow.
Grant a little respite now :
See a disenchanted nation
Springs like day from desolation ;
To Truth its state is dedicate,
And Freedom leads it forth, her mate ; 570
A legioned band of linkèd brothers
Whom Love calls children—

SEMICHORUS II.

'Tis another's :
See how kindred murder kin :
'Tis the vintage-time for death and sin :
Blood, like new wine, bubbles within :
Till Despair smothers
The struggling world, which slaves and tyrants win.
[All the FURIES vanish, except one.]

IONE. Hark, sister ! what a low yet dreadful groan
Quite unsuppressed is tearing up the heart
Of the good Titan, as storms tear the deep, 580
And beasts hear the sea moan in inland caves.
Darest thou observe how the fiends torture him ?

PANTHEA. Alas ! I looked forth twice, but will no
more.

IONE. What didst thou see ?

PANTHEA. A woful sight : a youth

With patient looks nailed to a crucifix.

IONE. What next ?

PANTHEA. The heaven around, the earth below
Was peopled with thick shapes of human death,
All horrible, and wrought by human hands,
And some appeared the work of human hearts,
For men were slowly killed by frowns and smiles : 590
And other sights too foul to speak and live
Were wandering by. Let us not tempt worse fear
By looking forth : those groans are grief enough.

FURY. Behold an emblem : those who do endure
Deep wrongs for man, and scorn, and chains, but heap
Thousandfold torment on themselves and him.

PROMETHEUS. Remit the anguish of that lighted stare ;
Close those wan lips ; let that thorn-wounded brow
Stream not with blood ; it mingles with thy tears !
Fix, fix those tortured orbs in peace and death, 600
So thy sick throes shake not that crucifix,
So those pale fingers play not with thy gore.
O, horrible ! Thy name I will not speak,
It hath become a curse. I see, I see
The wise, the mild, the lofty, and the just,
Whom thy slaves hate for being like to thee,
Some hunted by foul lies from their heart's home,
An early-chosen, late-lamented home ;
As hooded ounces cling to the driven hind ;
Some linked to corpses in unwholesome cells : 610
Some—Hear I not the multitude laugh loud ?—
Impaled in lingering fire : and mighty realms
Float by my feet, like sea-uprooted isles,
Whose sons are kneaded down in common blood

By the red light of their own burning homes.

FURY. Blood thou canst see, and fire ; and canst hear
groans ;

Worse things, unheard, unseen, remain behind.

PROMETHEUS. Worse ?

FURY. In each human heart terror survives
The ravin it has gorged : the loftiest fear
All that they would disdain to think were true : 620
Hypocrisy and custom make their minds
The fanes of many a worship, now outworn.

They dare not devise good for man's estate,
And yet they know not that they do not dare.
The good want power, but to weep barren tears.
The powerful goodness want : worse need for them.
The wise want love ; and those who love want wisdom ;
And all best things are thus confused to ill.
Many are strong and rich, and would be just,
But live among their suffering fellow-men 630
As if none felt : they know not what they do.

PROMETHEUS. Thy words are like a cloud of wingèd
snakes ;
And yet I pity those they torture not.

FURY. Thou pitiest them ? I speak no more !

[*Vanishes.*
Ah woe !

PROMETHEUS.

Ah woe ! Alas ! pain, pain ever, for ever !
I close my tearless eyes, but see more clear
Thy works within my woe-illumèd mind,
Thou subtle tyrant ! Peace is in the grave.
The grave hides all things beautiful and good :
I am a God and cannot find it there, 640

Nor would I seek it : for, though dread revenge,
 This is defeat, fierce king, not victory.
 The sights with which thou tortur'est gird my soul
 With new endurance, till the hour arrives
 When they shall be no types of things which are.

PANTHEA. Alas ! what sawest thou more ?

PROMETHEUS. There are two woes :
 To speak, and to behold ; thou spare me one.
 Names are there, Nature's sacred watchwords, they
 Were borne aloft in bright emblazonry ;
 The nations thronged around, and cried aloud, 650
 As with one voice, Truth, liberty, and love !
 Suddenly fierce confusion fell from heaven
 Among them : there was strife, deceit, and fear :
 Tyrants rushed in, and did divide the spoil.
 This was the shadow of the truth I saw.

THE EARTH. I felt thy torture, son ; with such mixed
 joy

As pain and virtue give. To cheer thy state
 I bid ascend those subtle and fair spirits,
 Whose homes are the dim caves of human thought,
 And who inhabit, as birds wing the wind, 660
 Its world-surrounding aether : they behold
 Beyond that twilight realm, as in a glass,
 The future : may they speak comfort to thee !

PANTHEA. Look, sister, where a troop of spirits
 gather,
 Like flocks of clouds in spring's delightful weather,
 Thronging in the blue air !

IONE. And see ! more come,
 Like fountain-vapours when the winds are dumb,

That climb up the ravine in scattered lines.
And, hark ! is it the music of the pines ?
Is it the lake ? Is it the waterfall ? 670
PANTHEA. 'Tis something sadder, sweeter far than all.

CHORUS OF SPIRITS.

From unremembered ages we
Gentle guides and guardians be
Of heaven-oppressed mortality ;
And we breathe, and sicken not,
The atmosphere of human thought :
Be it dim, and dank, and gray,
Like a storm-extinguished day,
Travelled o'er by dying gleams ;
Be it bright as all between 680
Cloudless skies and windless streams,
Silent, liquid, and serene ;
As the birds within the wind,
As the fish within the wave,
As the thoughts of man's own mind
Float through all above the grave ;
We make there our liquid lair,
Voyaging cloudlike and unspent
Through the boundless element :
Thence we bear the prophecy 690
Which begins and ends in thee !

IONE. More yet come, one by one : the air around
them
Looks radiant as the air around a star.

FIRST SPIRIT.

On a battle-trumpet's blast
I fled hither, fast, fast, fast,
'Mid the darkness upward cast.
From the dust of creeds outworn,
From the tyrant's banner torn,
Gathering 'round me, onward borne,
There was mingled many a cry—
Freedom ! Hope ! Death ! Victory !
Till they faded through the sky ;
And one sound, above, around,
One sound beneath, around, above,
Was moving ; 'twas the soul of Love ;
'Twas the hope, the prophecy,
Which begins and ends in thee.

700

SECOND SPIRIT.

A rainbow's arch stood on the sea,
Which rocked beneath, immovably ;
And the triumphant storm did flee,
Like a conqueror, swift and proud,
Between, with many a captive cloud,
A shapeless, dark and rapid crowd,
Each by lightning riven in half :
I heard the thunder hoarsely laugh :
Mighty fleets were strewn like chaff
And spread beneath a hell of death
O'er the white waters. I alit
On a great ship lightning-split,
And speeded hither on the sigh

710

720

Of one who gave an enemy
His plank, then plunged aside to die.

THIRD SPIRIT.

I sate beside a sage's bed,
And the lamp was burning red
Near the book where he had fed,
When a Dream with plumes of flame,
To his pillow hovering came,
And I knew it was the same
Which had kindled long ago
Pity, eloquence, and woe ;
And the world awhile below
Wore the shade its lustre made.
It has borne me here as fleet
As Desire's lightning feet :
I must ride it back ere morrow,
Or the sage will wake in sorrow.

730

FOURTH SPIRIT.

On a poet's lips I slept
Dreaming like a love-adept
In the sound his breathing kept ;
Nor seeks nor finds he mortal blisses,
But feeds on the aëreal kisses
Of shapes that haunt thought's wildernesses.
He will watch from dawn to gloom
The lake-reflected sun illume
The yellow bees in the ivy-bloom,
Nor heed nor see, what things they be ;
But from these create he can

740

Forms more real than living man,
Nurslings of immortality !
One of these awakened me, 750
And I sped to succour thee.

JONE.

Behold'st thou not two shapes from the east and
west

Come, as two doves to one belovèd nest,
Twin nurslings of the all-sustaining air
On swift still wings glide down the atmosphere ?
And, hark ! their sweet, sad voices ! 'tis despair
Mingled with love and then dissolved in sound.

PANTHEA. Canst thou speak, sister? all my words
are drowned.

IONE. Their beauty gives me voice. See how they
float

On their sustaining wings of skiey grain,
Orange and azure deepening into gold :
Their soft smiles light the air like a star's fire. 760

CHORUS OF SPIRITS.

Hast thou beheld the form of Love ?

FIFTH SPIRIT.

As over wide dominions
I sped, like some swift cloud that wings the wide air's
wildernesses,
That planet-crested shape swept by on lightning-braided
pinions,

Scattering the liquid joy of life from his ambrosial
tresses :
His footsteps paved the world with light ; but as I passed
'twas fading,
And hollow Ruin yawned behind : great sages bound
in madness,
And headless patriots, and pale youths who perished, un-
upbraiding,
Gleamed in the night. I wandered o'er, till thou,
O King of sadness, 770
Turned by thy smile the worst I saw to recollected
gladness.

SIXTH SPIRIT.

Ah, sister ! Desolation is a delicate thing :
It walks not on the earth, it floats not on the air,
But treads with lulling footstep, and fans with silent
wing
The tender hopes which in their hearts the best and
gentlest bear ;
Who, soothed to false repose by the fanning plumes above
And the music-stirring motion of its soft and busy feet,
Dream visions of aëreal joy, and call the monster Love,
And wake, and find the shadow Pain, as he whom now
we greet.

CHORUS.

Though Ruin now Love's shadow be, 780
Following him, destroyingly,
On Death's white and wingèd steed,
Which the fleetest cannot flee,

Trampling down both flower and weed,
 Man and beast, and foul and fair,
 Like a tempest through the air ;
 Thou shalt quell this horseman grim,
 Woundless though in heart or limb.

PROMETHEUS. Spirits ! how know ye this shall be ?

CHORUS.

In the atmosphere we breathe, 790
 As buds grow red when the snow-storms flee,
 From Spring gathering up beneath,
 Whose mild winds shake the elder brake,
 And the wandering herdsmen know
 That the white-thorn soon will blow :
 Wisdom, Justice, Love, and Peace,
 When they struggle to increase,
 Are to us as soft winds be
 To shepherd boys, the prophecy
 Which begins and ends in thee. 800

IONE. Where are the Spirits fled ?

PANTHEA. Only a sense
 Remains of them, like the omnipotence
 Of music, when the inspired voice and lute
 Languish, ere yet the responses are mute,
 Which through the deep and labyrinthine soul,
 Like echoes through long caverns, wind and roll.

PROMETHEUS. How fair these airborn shapes ! and
 yet I feel
 Most vain all hope but love ; and thou art far,

Asia ! who, when my being overflowed,
Wert like a golden chalice to bright wine
Which else had sunk into the thirsty dust. 810
All things are still : alas ! how heavily
This quiet morning weighs upon my heart ;
Though I should dream I could even sleep with grief
If slumber were denied not. I would fain
Be what it is my destiny to be,
The saviour and the strength of suffering man,
Or sink into the original gulf of things :
There is no agony, and no solace left ;
Earth can console, Heaven can torment no more. 820

PANTHEA. Hast thou forgotten one who watches thee
The cold dark night, and never sleeps but when
The shadow of thy spirit falls on her ?

PROMETHEUS. I said all hope was vain but love : thou
lovest.

PANTHEA. Deeply in truth ; but the eastern star looks
white,
And Asia waits in that far Indian vale,
The scene of her sad exile ; rugged once
And desolate and frozen, like this ravine ;
But now invested with fair flowers and herbs,
And haunted by sweet airs and sounds, which flow 830
Among the woods and waters, from the aether
Of her transforming presence, which would fade
If it were mingled not with thine. Farewell !

ACT II.

SCENE I.—*Morning. A lovely Vale in the Indian Caucasus. ASIA alone.*

ASIA. From all the blasts of heaven thou hast descended :

Yes, like a spirit, like a thought, which makes
 Unwonted tears throng to the horny eyes,
 And beatings haunt the desolated heart,
 Which should have learnt repose : thou hast descended
 Cradled in tempests ; thou dost wake, O Spring !
 O child of many winds ! As suddenly
 Thou comest as the memory of a dream,
 Which now is sad because it hath been sweet ;
 Like genius, or like joy which riseth up
 As from the earth, clothing with golden clouds
 The desert of our life.

This is the season, this the day, the hour ;
 At sunrise thou shouldst come, sweet sister mine,
 Too long desired, too long delaying, come !
 How like death-worms the wingless moments crawl !

The point of one white star is quivering still
 Deep in the orange light of widening morn
 Beyond the purple mountains : through a chasm
 Of wind-divided mist the darker lake

Reflects it : now it wanes : it gleams again
 As the waves fade, and as the burning threads
 Of woven cloud unravel in pale air :
 'Tis lost ! and through yon peaks of cloud-like snow
 The roseate sunlight quivers : hear I not

10

20

The *Æolian* music of her sea-green plumes
Winnowing the crimson dawn ? [PANTHEA enters.

I feel, I see

Those eyes which burn through smiles that fade in tears,
Like stars half quenched in mists of silver dew.

Belovèd and most beautiful, who wearest 30

The shadow of that soul by which I live,
How late thou art ! the spherèd sun had climbed
The sea ; my heart was sick with hope, before
The printless air felt thy belated plumes.

PANTHEA. Pardon, great Sister ! but my wings were
faint

With the delight of a remembered dream,
As are the noontide plumes of summer winds
Satiate with sweet flowers. I was wont to sleep
Peacefully, and awake refreshed and calm

Before the sacred Titan's fall, and thy 40

Unhappy love, had made, through use and pity,
Both love and woe familiar to my heart

As they had grown to thine : erewhile I slept

Under the glaucous caverns of old Ocean

Within dim bowers of green and purple moss,

Our young Ione's soft and milky arms

Locked then, as now, behind my dark, moist hair,
While my shut eyes and cheek were pressed within
The folded depth of her life-breathing bosom :
But not as now, since I am made the wind 50

Which fails beneath the music that I bear

Of thy most wordless converse ; since dissolved
Into the sense with which love talks, my rest

Was troubled and yet sweet ; my waking hours

Too full of care and pain.

ASIA. Lift up thine eyes,
And let me read thy dream.

PANTHEA. As I have said
With our sea-sister at his feet I slept.
The mountain mists, condensing at our voice
Under the moon, had spread their snowy flakes,
From the keen ice shielding our linkèd sleep. 60
Then two dreams came. One, I remember not.
But in the other his pale wound-worn limbs
Fell from Prometheus, and the azure night
Grew radiant with the glory of that form
Which lives unchanged within, and his voice fell
Like music which makes giddy the dim brain,
Faint with intoxication of keen joy :
' Sister of her whose footsteps pave the world
With loveliness—more fair than aught but her,
Whose shadow thou art—lift thine eyes on me.' 70
I lifted them : the overpowering light
Of that immortal shape was shadowed o'er
By love ; which, from his soft and flowing limbs,
And passion-parted lips, and keen, faint eyes,
Steamed forth like vaporous fire ; an atmosphere
Which wrapped me in its all-dissolving power,
As the warm aether of the morning sun
Wraps ere it drinks some cloud of wandering dew.
I saw not, heard not, moved not, only felt
His presence flow and mingle through my blood 80
Till it became his life, and his grew mine,
And I was thus absorbed, until it passed,
And like the vapours when the sun sinks down,

Gathering again in drops upon the pines,
 And tremulous as they, in the deep night
 My being was condensed ; and as the rays
 Of thought were slowly gathered, I could hear
 His voice, whose accents lingered ere they died
 Like footsteps of weak melody : thy name
 Among the many sounds alone I heard
 Of what might be articulate ; though still
 I listened through the night when sound was none.
 Ione wakened then, and said to me :

‘ Canst thou divine what troubles me to-night ?
 I always knew what I desired before,
 Nor ever found delight to wish in vain.
 But now I cannot tell thee what I seek ;
 I know not ; something sweet, since it is sweet
 Even to desire ; it is thy sport, false sister ;
 Thou hast discovered some enchantment old,
 Whose spells have stolen my spirit as I slept
 And mingled it with thine : for when just now
 We kissed, I felt within thy parted lips
 The sweet air that sustained me, and the warmth
 Of the life-blood, for loss of which I faint,
 Quivered between our intertwining arms.’
 I answered not, for the Eastern star grew pale,
 But fled to thee.

ASIA. Thou speakest, but thy words
 Are as the air : I feel them not : Oh, lift
 Thine eyes, that I may read his written soul ! 110

PANTHEA. I lift them though they droop beneath the
 load
 Of that they would express : what canst thou see

But thine own fairest shadow imaged there ?

ASIA. Thine eyes are like the deep, blue, boundless
heaven

Contracted to two circles underneath

Their long, fine lashes ; dark, far, measureless,
Orb within orb, and line through line inwoven.

PANTHEA. Why lookest thou as if a spirit passed ?

ASIA. There is a change : beyond their inmost depth
I see a shade, a shape : 'tis He, arrayed 120

In the soft light of his own smiles, which spread

Like radiance from the cloud-surrounded moon.

Prometheus, it is thine ! depart not yet !

Say not those smiles that we shall meet again

Within that bright pavilion which their beams

Shall build o'er the waste world ? The dream is told.

What shape is that between us ? Its rude hair

Roughens the wind that lifts it, its regard

Is wild and quick, yet 'tis a thing of air,

For through its gray robe gleams the golden dew 130

Whose stars the noon has quenched not.

DREAM. Follow ! Follow !

PANTHEA. It is mine other dream.

ASIA. It disappears.

PANTHEA. It passes now into my mind. Methought
As we sate here, the flower-infolding buds

Burst on yon lightning-blasted almond-tree,

When swift from the white Scythian wilderness

A wind swept forth wrinkling the Earth with frost :

I looked, and all the blossoms were blown down ;

But on each leaf was stamped, as the blue bells

Of Hyacinth tell Apollo's written grief,

140

O, FOLLOW, FOLLOW !

ASIA. As you speak, your words
Fill, pause by pause, my own forgotten sleep
With shapes. Methought among these lawns together
We wandered, underneath the young gray dawn,
And multitudes of dense white fleecy clouds
Were wandering in thick flocks along the mountains
Shepherded by the slow, unwilling wind ;
And the white dew on the new-bladed grass,
Just piercing the dark earth, hung silently ;
And there was more which I remember not : 150
But on the shadows of the morning clouds,
Athwart the purple mountain slope, was written
FOLLOW, O, FOLLOW ! as they vanished by ;
And on each herb, from which Heaven's dew had fallen,
The like was stamped, as with a withering fire ;
A wind arose among the pines ; it shook
The clinging music from their boughs, and then
Low, sweet, faint sounds, like the farewell of ghosts,
Were heard : O, FOLLOW, FOLLOW, FOLLOW ME !
And then I said : 'Panthea, look on me.' 160
But in the depth of those belovèd eyes
Still I saw, FOLLOW, FOLLOW !

ECHO. Follow, follow !

PANTHEA. The crags, this clear spring morning, mock
our voices

As they were spirit-tongued.

ASIA. It is some being
Around the crags. What fine clear sounds ! O, list !

ECHOES (*unseen*).

Echoes we : listen !

We cannot stay :
 As dew-stars glisten
 Then fade away—
 Child of Ocean !

170

ASIA. Hark ! Spirits speak. The liquid responses
 Of their aëreal tongues yet sound.

PANTHEA.

I hear.

ECHOES.

O, follow, follow,
 As our voice recedeth
 Through the caverns hollow,
 Where the forest spreadeth ;
 (*More distant.*)

O, follow, follow !
 Through the caverns hollow,
 As the song floats thou pursue,
 Where the wild bee never flew.
 Through the noontide darkness deep,
 By the odour-breathing sleep
 Of faint night flowers, and the waves
 At the fountain-lighted caves,
 While our music, wild and sweet,
 Mocks thy gently falling feet,
 Child of Ocean !

180

ASIA. Shall we pursue the sound ? It grows more
 faint
 And distant.

PANTHEA. List ! the strain floats nearer now.

ECHOES.

In the world unknown
Sleeps a voice unspoken ;
By thy step alone
Can its rest be broken ;
Child of Ocean !

ASIA. How the notes sink upon the ebbing wind !

ECHOES.

O, follow, follow !
Through the caverns hollow,
As the song floats thou pursue,
By the woodland noontide dew ;
By the forest, lakes, and fountains,
Through the many-folded mountains ;
To the rents, and gulfs, and chasms,
Where the Earth reposed from spasms,
On the day when He and thou
Parted, to commingle now ;
Child of Ocean !

ASIA. Come, sweet Panthea, link thy hand in mine,
And follow, ere the voices fade away.

SCENE II.—*A Forest, intermingled with Rocks and Caverns.*

ASIA and PANTHEA pass into it. Two young Fauns
are sitting on a Rock listening.

SEMICHORUS I. OF SPIRITS.

The path through which that lovely twain
Have passed, by cedar, pine, and yew,
And each dark tree that ever grew,

Is curtained out from Heaven's wide blue ;
 Nor sun, nor moon, nor wind, nor rain,
 Can pierce its interwoven bowers,
 Nor aught, save where some cloud of dew,
 Drifted along the earth-creeping breeze,
 Between the trunks of the hoar trees,
 Hangs each a pearl in the pale flowers 10
 Of the green laurel, blown anew ;
 And bends, and then fades silently,
 One frail and fair anemone :
 Or when some star of many a one
 That climbs and wanders through steep night,
 Has found the cleft through which alone
 Beams fall from high those depths upon
 Ere it is borne away, away,
 By the swift Heavens that cannot stay,
 It scatters drops of golden light, 20
 Like lines of rain that ne'er unite :
 And the gloom divine is all around,
 And underneath is the mossy ground.

SEMICHORUS II.

There the voluptuous nightingales,
 Are awake through all the broad noonday.
 When one with bliss or sadness fails,
 And through the windless ivy-boughs
 Sick with sweet love, droops dying away
 On its mate's music-panting bosom ;
 Another from the swinging blossom, 30
 Watching to catch the languid close
 Of the last strain, then lifts on high

The wings of the weak melody,
'Till some new strain of feeling bear
The song, and all the woods are mute ;
When there is heard through the dim air
The rush of wings, and rising there
Like many a lake-surrounded flute,
Sounds overflow the listener's brain
So sweet, that joy is almost pain.

40

SEMICHORUS I.

There those enchanted eddies play
Of echoes, music-tongued, which draw,
By Demogorgon's mighty law,
With melting rapture, or sweet awe,
All spirits on that secret way ;
As inland boats are driven to Ocean
Down streams made strong with mountain-thaw :
And first there comes a gentle sound
To those in talk or slumber bound,
And wakes the destined soft emotion,—
Attracts, impels them ; those who saw
Say from the breathing earth behind
There steams a plume-uplifting wind
Which drives them on their path, while they
Believe their own swift wings and feet
The sweet desires within obey :
And so they float upon their way,
Until, still sweet, but loud and strong,
The storm of sound is driven along,
Sucked up and hurrying : as they fleet
Behind, its gathering billows meet

50

60

And to the fatal mountain bear
Like clouds amid the yielding air.

FIRST FAUN. Canst thou imagine where those spirits
live

Which make such delicate music in the woods ?
We haunt within the least frequented caves
And closest coverts, and we know these wilds,
Yet never meet them, though we hear them oft :
Where may they hide themselves ?

SECOND FAUN. 'Tis hard to tell :

I have heard those more skilled in spirits say, 70
The bubbles, which the enchantment of the sun
Sucks from the pale faint water-flowers that pave
The oozy bottom of clear lakes and pools,
Are the pavilions where such dwell and float
Under the green and golden atmosphere
Which noontide kindles through the woven leaves ;
And when these burst, and the thin fiery air,
The which they breathed within those lucent domes,
Ascends to flow like meteors through the night,
They ride on them, and rein their headlong speed, 80
And bow their burning crests, and glide in fire
Under the waters of the earth again.

FIRST FAUN. If such live thus, have others other lives,
Under pink blossoms or within the bells
Of meadow flowers, or folded violets deep,
Or on their dying odours, when they die,
Or in the sunlight of the spherèd dew ?

SECOND FAUN. Ay, many more which we may well
divine.

But, should we stay to speak, noontide would come,
And thwart Silenus find his goats undrawn, 90
And grudge to sing those wise and lovely songs
Of Fate, and Chance, and God, and Chaos old,
And Love, and the chained Titan's woful doom,
And how he shall be loosed, and make the earth
One brotherhood : delightful strains which cheer
Our solitary twilights, and which charm
To silence the unenvying nightingales.

SCENE III.—A PINNACLE OF ROCK AMONG MOUNTAINS.
ASIA *and* PANTHEA.

PANTHEA. Hither the sound has borne us—to the
realm
Of Demogorgon, and the mighty portal,
Like a volcano's meteor-breathing chasm,
Whence the oracular vapour is hurled up
Which lonely men drink wandering in their youth,
And call truth, virtue, love, genius, or joy,
That maddening wine of life, whose dregs they drain
To deep intoxication ; and uplift,
Like Mænads who cry loud, Evoe ! Evoe !
The voice which is contagion to the world. 10

ASIA. Fit throne for such a Power ! Magnificent !
How glorious art thou, Earth ! And if thou be
The shadow of some spirit lovelier still,
Though evil stain its work, and it should be
Like its creation, weak yet beautiful,
I could fall down and worship that and thee.
Even now my heart adoreth : Wonderful !

Look, sister, ere the vapour dim thy brain :
Beneath is a wide plain of billowy mist,
As a lake, paving in the morning sky, 20
With azure waves which burst in silver light,
Some Indian vale. Behold it, rolling on
Under the curdling winds, and islanding
The peak whereon we stand, midway, around,
Encinctured by the dark and blooming forests,
Dim twilight-lawns, and stream-illumèd caves,
And wind-enchanted shapes of wandering mist ;
And far on high the keen sky-cleaving mountains
From icy spires of sun-like radiance fling
The dawn, as lifted Ocean's dazzling spray, 30
From some Atlantic islet scattered up,
Spangles the wind with lamp-like water-drops.
The vale is girdled with their walls, a howl
Of cataracts from their thaw-cloven ravines,
Satiates the listening wind, continuous, vast,
Awful as silence. Hark ! the rushing snow !
The sun-awakened avalanche ! whose mass,
Thrice sifted by the storm, had gathered there
Flake after flake, in heaven-defying minds
As thought by thought is piled, till some great truth 40
Is loosened, and the nations echo round,
Shaken to their roots, as do the mountains now.

PANTHEA. Look how the gusty sea of mist is breaking
In crimson foam, even at our feet ! it rises
As Ocean at the enchantment of the moon
Round foodless men wrecked on some oozy isle.

ASIA. The fragments of the cloud are scattered up ;
The wind that lifts them disentwines my hair ;

Its billows now sweep o'er mine eyes ; my brain
Grows dizzy ; see'st thou shapes within the mist ? 50

PANTHEA. A countenance with beckoning smiles :
there burns

An azure fire within its golden locks !
Another and another : hark ! they speak !

SONG OF SPIRITS.

To the deep, to the deep,
Down, down !

Through the shade of sleep,
Through the cloudy strife
Of Death and of Life ;
Through the veil and the bar
Of things which seem and are

Even to the steps of the remotest throne,
Down, down !

60

While the sound whirls around,
Down, down !

As the fawn draws the hound,
As the lightning the vapour,
As a weak moth the taper ;
Death, despair ; love, sorrow ;
Time both ; to-day, to-morrow ;
As steel obeys the spirit of the stone,

70

Down, down !

Through the gray, void abysm,
Down, down !

Where the air is no prism,
And the moon and stars are not,

And the cavern-crags wear not
 The radiance of Heaven,
 Nor the gloom to Earth given,
 Where there is One pervading, One alone,
 Down, down !

80

In the depth of the deep,
 Down, down !
 Like veiled lightning asleep,
 Like the spark nursed in embers,
 The last look Love remembers,
 Like a diamond, which shines
 On the dark wealth of mines,
 A spell is treasured but for thee alone.
 Down, down !

We have bound thee, we guide thee ;
 Down, down !
 With the bright form beside thee ;
 Resist not the weakness,
 Such strength is in meekness
 That the Eternal, the Immortal,
 Must unloose through life's portal
 The snake-like Doom coiled underneath his throne
 By that alone.

SCENE IV.—THE CAVE OF DEMOGORGON. ASIA *and*
 PANTHEA.

PANTHEA. What veiled form sits on that ebon throne ?

ASIA. The veil has fallen.

PANTHEA. I see a mighty darkness

Filling the seat of power, and rays of gloom
Dart round, as light from the meridian sun.
—Ungazed upon and shapeless ; neither limb,
Nor form, nor outline ; yet we feel it is
A living Spirit.

DEMOGORON. Ask what thou wouldest know.

ASIA. What canst thou tell ?

DEMOGORON. All things thou dar'st demand.

ASIA. Who made the living world ?

DEMOGORON. God.

ASIA. Who made all
That it contains ? thought, passion, reason, will, 10
Imagination ?

DEMOGORON. God : Almighty God.

ASIA. Who made that sense which, when the winds of
Spring

In rarest visitation, or the voice
Of one belovèd heard in youth alone,
Fills the faint eyes with falling tears which dim
The radiant looks of unbewailing flowers,
And leaves this peopled earth a solitude
When it returns no more ?

DEMOGORON. Merciful God.

ASIA. And who made terror, madness, crime, re-
morse,

Which from the links of the great chain of things, 20
To every thought within the mind of man
Sway and drag heavily, and each one reels
Under the load towards the pit of death ;
Abandoned hope, and love that turns to hate ;
And self-contempt, bitterer to drink than blood ;

Pain, whose unheeded and familiar speech
Is howling, and keen shrieks, day after day ;
And Hell, or the sharp fear of Hell ?

DEMOGORON. He reigns.

ASIA. Utter his name : a world pining in pain
Asks but his name : curses shall drag him down. 30

DEMOGORON. He reigns.

ASIA. I feel, I know it : who ?

DEMOGORON. He reigns.

ASIA. Who reigns ? There was the Heaven and Earth
at first,

And Light and Love ; then Saturn, from whose throne
Time fell, an envious shadow : such the state
Of the earth's primal spirits beneath his sway,
As the calm joy of flowers and living leaves
Before the wind or sun has withered them
And semivital worms ; but he refused
The birthright of their being, knowledge, power,
The skill which wields the elements, the thought 40
Which pierces this dim universe like light,
Self-empire, and the majesty of love ;
For thirst of which they fainted. Then Prometheus
Gave wisdom, which is strength, to Jupiter,
And with this law alone, ' Let man be free,'
Clothed him with the dominion of wide Heaven.
To know nor faith, nor love, nor law ; to be
Omnipotent but friendless is to reign ;
And Jove now reigned ; for on the race of man
First famine, and then toil, and then disease,
Strife, wounds, and ghastly death unseen before, 50
Fell ; and the unseasonable seasons drove

With alternating shafts of frost and fire,
Their shelterless, pale tribes to mountain caves :
And in their desert hearts fierce wants he sent,
And mad disquietudes, and shadows idle
Of unreal good, which levied mutual war,
So ruining the lair wherein they raged.

Prometheus saw, and waked the legioned hopes
Which sleep within folded Elysian flowers, 60
Nepenthe, Moly, Amaranth, fadeless blooms,
That they might hide with thin and rainbow wings
The shape of Death ; and Love he sent to bind
The disunited tendrils of that vine
Which bears the wine of life, the human heart ;
And he tamed fire which, like some beast of prey,
Most terrible, but lovely, played beneath
The frown of man ; and tortured to his will
Iron and gold, the slaves and signs of power,
And gems and poisons, and all subtlest forms 70
Hidden beneath the mountains and the waves.

He gave man speech, and speech created thought,
Which is the measure of the universe ;
And Science struck the thrones of earth and heaven,
Which shook, but fell not ; and the harmonious mind
Poured itself forth in all-prophetic song ;
And music lifted up the listening spirit
Until it walked, exempt from mortal care,
Godlike, o'er the clear billows of sweet sound ;
And human hands first mimicked and then mocked, 80
With moulded limbs more lovely than its own,
The human form, till marble grew divine ;
And mothers, gazing, drank the love men see

Reflected in their race, behold, and perish.
He told the hidden power of herbs and springs,
And Disease drank and slept. Death grew like sleep.
He taught the implicated orbits woven
Of the wide-wandering stars ; and how the sun
Changes his lair, and by what secret spell
The pale moon is transformed, when her broad eye 90
Gazes not on the interlunar sea :
He taught to rule, as life directs the limbs,
The tempest-wingèd chariots of the Ocean,
And the Celt knew the Indian. Cities then
Were built, and through their snow-like columns flowed
The warm winds, and the azure aether shone,
And the blue sea and shadowy hills were seen.
Such, the alleviations of his state,
Prometheus gave to man, for which he hangs
Withering in destined pain : but who rains down 100
Evil, the immedicable plague, which, while
Man looks on his creation like a God
And sees that it is glorious, drives him on,
The wreck of his own will, the scorn of earth,
The outcast, the abandoned, the alone ?
Not Jove : while yet his frown shook Heaven, ay, when
His adversary from adamantine chains
Cursed him, he trembled like a slave. Declare
Who is his master ? Is he too a slave ?

DEMOGORGON. All spirits are enslaved which serve
things evil : 110

Thou knowest if Jupiter be such or no.

ASIA. Whom callest thou God ?

DEMOGORGON. I spoke but as ye speak,

For Jove is the supreme of living things.

ASIA. Who is the master of the slave ?

DEMOGORGON. If the abyss

Could vomit forth its secrets. . . . But a voice

Is wanting, the deep truth is imageless ;

For what would it avail to bid thee gaze

On the revolving world ? What to bid speak

Fate, Time, Occasion, Chance, and Change ? To these

All things are subject but eternal Love.

120

ASIA. So much I asked before, and my heart gave
The response thou hast given ; and of such truths
Each to itself must be the oracle.

One more demand ; and do thou answer me
As mine own soul would answer, did it know
That which I ask. Prometheus shall arise
Henceforth the sun of this rejoicing world :
When shall the destined hour arrive ?

DEMOGORGON. Behold !

ASIA. The rocks are cloven, and through the purple
night

I see cars drawn by rainbow-wingèd steeds 130
Which trample the dim winds : in each there stands
A wild-eyed charioteer urging their flight.
Some look behind, as fiends pursued them there,
And yet I see no shapes but the keen stars :
Others, with burning eyes, lean forth, and drink
With eager lips the wind of their own speed,
As if the thing they loved fled on before,
And now, even now, they clasped it. Their bright locks
Stream like a comet's flashing hair : they all
Sweep onward.

DEMOGORON. These are the immortal Hours, 140
Of whom thou didst demand. One waits for thee.

ASIA. A spirit with a dreadful countenance
Checks its dark chariot by the craggy gulf.
Unlike thy brethren, ghastly charioteer,
Who art thou? Whither wouldst thou bear me? Speak!

SPIRIT. I am the shadow of a destiny
More dread than is my aspect: ere yon planet
Has set, the darkness which ascends with me
Shall wrap in lasting night heaven's kingless throne.

ASIA. What meanest thou?

PANTHEA. That terrible shadow floats
Up from its throne, as may the lurid smoke 151
Of earthquake-ruined cities o'er the sea.
Lo! it ascends the car; the coursers fly
Terrified: watch its path among the stars
Blackening the night!

ASIA. Thus I am answered: strange!

PANTHEA. See, near the verge, another chariot stays;
An ivory shell inlaid with crimson fire,
Which comes and goes within its sculptured rim
Of delicate strange tracery; the young spirit
That guides it has the dove-like eyes of hope; 160
How its soft smiles attract the soul! as light
Lures wingèd insects through the lampless air.

SPIRIT.

My coursers are fed with the lightning,
They drink of the whirlwind's stream,
And when the red morning is bright'ning
They bathe in the fresh sunbeam;

They have strength for their swiftness I deem,
Then ascend with me, daughter of Ocean.

I desire : and their speed makes night kindle ;
I fear : they outstrip the Typhoon ; 170
Ere the cloud piled on Atlas can dwindle
We encircle the earth and the moon :
We shall rest from long labours at noon :
Then ascend with me, daughter of Ocean.

SCENE V.—*The Car pauses within a Cloud on the top of a snowy Mountain. ASIA, PANTHEA, and the SPIRIT OF THE HOUR.*

SPIRIT.

On the brink of the night and the morning
My coursers are wont to respire ;
But the Earth has just whispered a warning
That their flight must be swifter than fire :
They shall drink the hot speed of desire !

ASIA. Thou breathest on their nostrils, but my breath
Would give them swifter speed.

SPIRIT. Alas ! it could not.

PANTHEA. Oh Spirit ! pause, and tell whence is the
light

Which fills this cloud ? the sun is yet unrisen.

SPIRIT. The sun will rise not until noon. Apollo 10
Is held in heaven by wonder ; and the light
Which fills this vapour, as the aëreal hue
Of fountain-gazing roses fills the water,

Flows from thy mighty sister.

PANTHEA. Yes, I feel—

ASIA. What is it with thee, sister ? Thou art pale.

PANTHEA. How thou art changed ! I dare not look
on thee ;

I feel but see thee not. I scarce endure
The radiance of thy beauty. Some good change
Is working in the elements, which suffer
Thy presence thus unveiled. The Nereids tell 20

That on the day when the clear hyaline
Was cloven at thine uprise, and thou didst stand
Within a veinèd shell, which floated on
Over the calm floor of the crystal sea,

Among the *Æ*gean isles, and by the shores
Which bear thy name ; love, like the atmosphere
Of the sun's fire filling the living world,

Burst from thee, and illumined earth and heaven
And the deep ocean and the sunless caves

And all that dwells within them ; till grief cast 30
Eclipse upon the soul from which it came :

Such art thou now ; nor is it I alone,
Thy sister, thy companion, thine own chosen one,
But the whole world which seeks thy sympathy.
Hearest thou not sounds i' the air which speak the love
Of all articulate beings ? Feelest thou not
The inanimate winds enamoured of thee ? List ! [Music.

ASIA. Thy words are sweeter than aught else but his
Whose echoes they are : yet all love is sweet,
Given or returned. Common as light is love, 40
And its familiar voice wearies not ever.
Like the wide heaven, the all-sustaining air,

It makes the reptile equal to the God :
They who inspire it most are fortunate,
As I am now ; but those who feel it most
Are happier still, after long sufferings,
As I shall soon become.

PANTHEA.

List ! Spirits speak.

VOICE IN THE AIR, SINGING.

Life of Life ! thy lips enkindle
With their love the breath between them ;
And thy smiles before they dwindle
Make the cold air fire ; then screen them
In those looks, where whoso gazes
Faints, entangled in their mazes.

50

Child of Light ! thy limbs are burning
Through the vest which seems to hide them ;
As the radiant lines of morning
Through the clouds ere they divide them ;
And this atmosphere divinest
Shrouds thee wheresoe'er thou shonest.

Fair are others ; none beholds thee,
But thy voice sounds low and tender
Like the fairest, for it folds thee
From the sight, that liquid splendour,
And all feel, yet see thee never,
As I feel now, lost for ever !

60

Lamp of Earth ! where'er thou movest
Its dim shapes are clad with brightness,
And the souls of whom thou lovest

Walk upon the winds with lightness,
Till they fail, as I am failing,
Dizzy, lost, yet unbewailing !

ASIA.

My soul is an enchanted boat,
Which, like a sleeping swan, doth float
Upon the silver waves of thy sweet singing ;
And thine doth like an angel sit
Beside a helm conducting it,
Whilst all the winds with melody are ringing.

It seems to float ever, for ever,
Upon that many-winding river,
Between mountains, woods, abysses,
A paradise of wildernesses !

Till, like one in slumber bound,
Borne to the ocean, I float down, around,
Into a sea profound, of ever-spreading sound :

Meanwhile thy spirit lifts its pinions
In music's most serene dominions ;
Catching the winds that fan that happy heaven.

And we sail on, away, afar,
Without a course, without a star,
But, by the instinct of sweet music driven ;

Till through Elysian garden islets
By thee, most beautiful of pilots,
Where never mortal pinnace glided,
The boat of my desire is guided :

Realms where the air we breathe is love,
Which in the winds and on the waves doth move,
Harmonizing this earth with what we feel above.

We have passed Age's icy caves,
And Manhood's dark and tossing waves,
And Youth's smooth ocean, smiling to betray : 100
Beyond the glassy gulfs we flee
Of shadow-peopled Infancy,
Through Death and Birth, to a diviner day ;
A paradise of vaulted bowers,
Lit by downward-gazing flowers,
And watery paths that wind between
Wildernesses calm and green,
Peopled by shapes too bright to see,
And rest, having beheld ; somewhat like thee ;
Which walk upon the sea, and chant melodiously ! 110

END OF THE SECOND ACT.

ACT III.

SCENE I.—*Heaven. JUPITER on his Throne ; THETIS and the other Deities assembled.*

JUPITER. Ye congregated powers of heaven, who share
The glory and the strength of him ye serve,
Rejoice ! henceforth I am omnipotent.
All else had been subdued to me ; alone
The soul of man, like unextinguished fire,
Yet burns towards heaven with fierce reproach, and
doubt,
And lamentation, and reluctant prayer,
Hurling up insurrection, which might make
Our antique empire insecure, though built
On eldest faith, and hell's coeval, fear ; 10

And though my curses through the pendulous air,
 Like snow on herbless peaks, fall flake by flake,
 And cling to it ; though under my wrath's night
 It climbs the crags of life, step after step,
 Which wound it, as ice wounds unsandalled feet,
 It yet remains supreme o'er misery,
 Aspiring, unrepressed, yet soon to fall :
 Even now have I begotten a strange wonder,
 That fatal child, the terror of the earth,
 Who waits but till the destined hour arrive, 20
 Bearing from Demogorgon's vacant throne
 The dreadful might of ever-living limbs
 Which clothed that awful spirit unbeheld,
 To redescend, and trample out the spark.
 Pour forth heaven's wine, Idæan Ganymede,
 And let it fill the Dædal cups like fire,
 And from the flower-inwoven soil divine
 Ye all-triumphant harmonies arise,
 As dew from earth under the twilight stars :
 Drink ! be the nectar circling through your veins 30
 The soul of joy, ye ever-living Gods,
 Till exultation burst in one wide voice
 Like music from Elysian winds.

And thou

Ascend beside me, veilèd in the light
 Of the desire which makes thee one with me,
 Thetis, bright image of eternity !
 When thou didst cry, 'Insufferable might !
 God ! Spare me ! I sustain not the quick flames,
 The penetrating presence ; all my being,
 Like him whom the Numidian seps did thaw 40

Into a dew with poison, is dissolved,
Sinking through its foundations : ' even then
Two mighty spirits, mingling, made a third
Mightier than either, which, unbodied now,
Between us floats, felt, although un beheld,
Waiting the incarnation, which ascends,
(Hear ye the thunder of the fiery wheels
Griding the winds ?) from Demogorgon's throne.
Victory ! victory ! Feel'st thou not, O world,
The earthquake of his chariot thundering up
Olympus ?

[*The Car of the Hour arrives. DEMOGORGON descends, and moves towards the Throne of JUPITER.*

Awful shape, what art thou ? Speak !

DEMOGORGON. Eternity. Demand no direr name.
Descend, and follow me down the abyss.
I am thy child, as thou wert Saturn's child ;
Mightier than thee : and we must dwell together
Henceforth in darkness. Lift thy lightnings not.
The tyranny of heaven none may retain,
Or reassume, or hold, succeeding thee :
Yet if thou wilt, as 'tis the destiny
Of trodden worms to writhe till they are dead,
Put forth thy might.

Mercy ! mercy !
No pity, no release, no respite ! Oh,
That thou wouldest make mine enemy my judge,

Even where he hangs, seared by my long revenge,
 On Caucasus ! he would not doom me thus.
 Gentle, and just, and dreadless, is he not
 The monarch of the world ? What then art thou ?
 No refuge ! no appeal !

Sink with me then,

70

We two will sink on the wide waves of ruin,
 Even as a vulture and a snake outspent
 Drop, twisted in inextricable fight,
 Into a shoreless sea. Let hell unlock
 Its mounded oceans of tempestuous fire,
 And whelm on them into the bottomless void
 This desolated world, and thee, and me,
 The conqueror and the conquered, and the wreck
 Of that for which they combated.

Ai ! Ai !

The elements obey me not. I sink
 Dizzily down, ever, for ever, down.
 And, like a cloud, mine enemy above
 Darkens my fall with victory ! Ai, Ai !

80

SCENE II.—*The Mouth of a great River in the Island Atlantis.* OCEAN is discovered reclining near the Shore ; APOLLO stands beside him.

OCEAN. He fell, thou sayest, beneath his conqueror's frown ?

APOLLO. Ay, when the strife was ended which made dim

The orb I rule, and shook the solid stars,
 The terrors of his eye illumined heaven
 With sanguine light, through the thick ragged skirts

Of the victorious darkness, as he fell :
Like the last glare of day's red agony,
Which, from a rent among the fiery clouds,
Burns far along the tempest-wrinkled deep.

OCEAN. He sunk to the abyss ? To the dark void ? 10

APOLLO. An eagle so caught in some bursting cloud
On Caucasus, his thunder-baffled wings
Entangled in the whirlwind, and his eyes
Which gazed on the undazzling sun, now blinded
By the white lightning, while the ponderous hail
Beats on his struggling form, which sinks at length
Prone, and the aëreal ice clings over it.

OCEAN. Henceforth the fields of heaven-reflecting sea
Which are my realm, will heave, unstained with blood,
Beneath the uplifting winds, like plains of corn 20
Swayed by the summer air ; my streams will flow
Round many-peopled continents, and round
Fortunate isles ; and from their glassy thrones
Blue Proteus and his humid nymphs shall mark
The shadow of fair ships, as mortals see
The floating bark of the light-laden moon
With that white star, its sightless pilot's crest,
Borne down the rapid sunset's ebbing sea ;
Tracking their path no more by blood and groans,
And desolation, and the mingled voice 30
Of slavery and command ; but by the light
Of wave-reflecting flowers, and floating odours,
And music soft, and mild, free, gentle voices,
And sweetest music, such as spirits love.

APOLLO. And I shall gaze not on the deeds which
make

My mind obscure with sorrow, as eclipse
Darkens the sphere I guide ; but list, I hear
The small, clear, silver lute of the young Spirit
That sits i' the morning star.

A sound of waves is heard.

It is the unpastured sea hungering for calm.
Peace, monster; I come now. Farewell.

APOLLO. Farewell. 50

SCENE III.—Caucasus. PROMETHEUS, HERCULES, IONE,
the EARTH, SPIRITS, ASIA, and PANTHEA, borne in the
Car with the SPIRIT OF THE HOUR. HERCULES un-
binds PROMETHEUS, who descends.

HERCULES. Most glorious among Spirits, thus doth
strength
To wisdom, courage, and long-suffering love,
And thee, who art the form they animate,
Minister like a slave.

PROMETHEUS. Thy gentle words
Are sweeter even than freedom long desired

And long delayed.

Asia, thou light of life,
Shadow of beauty unbeheld : and ye,
Fair sister nymphs, who made long years of pain
Sweet to remember, through your love and care :
Henceforth we will not part. There is a cave, 10
All overgrown with trailing odorous plants,
Which curtain out the day with leaves and flowers,
And paved with veinèd emerald, and a fountain
Leaps in the midst with an awakening sound.
From its curved roof the mountain's frozen tears
Like snow, or silver, or long diamond spires,
Hang downward, raining forth a doubtful light :
And there is heard the ever-moving air,
Whispering without from tree to tree, and birds,
And bees ; and all around are mossy seats, 20
And the rough walls are clothed with long soft grass ;
A simple dwelling, which shall be our own ;
Where we will sit and talk of time and change,
As the world ebbs and flows, ourselves unchanged.
What can hide man from mutability ?
And if ye sigh, then I will smile ; and thou,
Ione, shalt chant fragments of sea-music,
Until I weep, when ye shall smile away
The tears she brought, which yet were sweet to shed.
We will entangle buds and flowers and beams 30
Which twinkle on the fountain's brim, and make
Strange combinations out of common things,
Like human babes in their brief innocence ;
And we will search, with looks and words of love,
For hidden thoughts, each lovelier than the last,

Our unexhausted spirits ; and like lutes
 Touched by the skill of the enamoured wind,
 Weave harmonies divine, yet ever new,
 From difference sweet where discord cannot be ;
 And hither come, sped on the charmèd winds, 40
 Which meet from all the points of heaven, as bees
 From every flower aëreal Enna feeds,
 At their known island-homes in Himera,
 The echoes of the human world, which tell
 Of the low voice of love, almost unheard,
 And dove-eyed pity's murmured pain, and music,
 Itself the echo of the heart, and all
 That tempers or improves man's life, now free ;
 And lovely apparitions,—dim at first,
 Then radiant, as the mind, arising bright 50
 From the embrace of beauty (whence the forms
 Of which these are the phantoms) casts on them
 The gathered rays which are reality—
 Shall visit us, the progeny immortal
 Of Painting, Sculpture, and rapt Poesy,
 And arts, though unimagined, yet to be.
 The wandering voices and the shadows these
 Of all that man becomes, the mediators
 Of that best worship love, by him and us
 Given and returned ; swift shapes and sounds, which
 grow 60
 More fair and soft as man grows wise and kind,
 And, veil by veil, evil and error fall :
 Such virtue has the cave and place around.

[*Turning to the SPIRIT OF THE HOUR.*

For thee, fair Spirit, one toil remains. Ione,

Give her that curvèd shell, which Proteus old
Made Asia's nuptial boon, breathing within it
A voice to be accomplished, and which thou
Didst hide in grass under the hollow rock.

IONE. Thou most desired Hour, more loved and lovely
Than all thy sisters, this is the mystic shell ; 70
See the pale azure fading into silver
Lining it with a soft yet glowing light :
Looks it not like lulled music sleeping there ?

SPIRIT. It seems in truth the fairest shell of Ocean :
Its sound must be at once both sweet and strange.

PROMETHEUS. Go, borne over the cities of mankind
On whirlwind-footed coursers : once again
Outspeed the sun around the orbèd world ;
And as thy chariot cleaves the kindling air,
Thou breathe into the many-folded shell, 80
Loosening its mighty music ; it shall be
As thunder mingled with clear echoes : then
Return ; and thou shalt dwell beside our cave.
And thou, O, Mother Earth !—

THE EARTH. I hear, I feel ;
Thy lips are on me, and their touch runs down
Even to the adamantine central gloom
Along these marble nerves ; 'tis life, 'tis joy,
And through my withered, old, and icy frame
The warmth of an immortal youth shoots down
Circling. Henceforth the many children fair 90
Folded in my sustaining arms ; all plants,
And creeping forms, and insects rainbow-winged,
And birds, and beasts, and fish, and human shapes,
Which drew disease and pain from my wan bosom,

Draining the poison of despair, shall take
 And interchange sweet nutriment ; to me
 Shall they become like sister-antelopes
 By one fair dam, snow-white and swift as wind,
 Nursed among lilies near a brimming stream.
 The dew-mists of my sunless sleep shall float 100
 Under the stars like balm : night-folded flowers
 Shall suck unwithering hues in their repose :
 And men and beasts in happy dreams shall gather
 Strength for the coming day, and all its joy :
 And death shall be the last embrace of her
 Who takes the life she gave, even as a mother
 Folding her child, says, 'Leave me not again.'

ASIA. Oh, mother ! wherefore speak the name of
 death ?
 Cease they to love, and move, and breathe, and speak,
 Who die ?

THE EARTH. It would avail not to reply : 110
 Thou art immortal, and this tongue is known
 But to the uncommunicating dead.
 Death is the veil which those who live call life :
 They sleep, and it is lifted : and meanwhile
 In mild variety the seasons mild
 With rainbow-skirted showers, and odorous winds,
 And long blue meteors cleansing the dull night,
 And the life-kindling shafts of the keen sun's
 All-piercing bow, and the dew-mingled rain
 Of the calm moonbeams, a soft influence mild, 120
 Shall clothe the forests and the fields, ay, even
 The crag-built deserts of the barren deep,
 With ever-living leaves, and fruits, and flowers.

And thou ! There is a cavern where my spirit
 Was panted forth in anguish whilst thy pain
 Made my heart mad, and those who did inhale it
 Became mad too, and built a temple there,
 And spoke, and were oracular, and lured
 The erring nations round to mutual war,
 And faithless faith, such as Jove kept with thee ; 130
 Which breath now rises, as amongst tall weeds
 A violet's exhalation, and it fills
 With a serener light and crimson air
 Intense, yet soft, the rocks and woods around ;
 It feeds the quick growth of the serpent vine,
 And the dark linkèd ivy tangling wild,
 And budding, blown, or odour-faded blooms
 Which star the winds with points of coloured light,
 As they rain through them, and bright golden globes
 Of fruit, suspended in their own green heaven, 140
 And through their veinèd leaves and amber stems
 The flowers whose purple and translucid bowls
 Stand ever mantling with aëreal dew,
 The drink of spirits : and it circles round,
 Like the soft waving wings of noonday dreams,
 Inspiring calm and happy thoughts, like mine,
 Now thou art thus restored. This cave is thine.
 Arise ! Appear !

[A SPIRIT rises in the likeness of a winged child.]

This is my torch-bearer ;

Who let his lamp out in old time with gazing
 On eyes from which he kindled it anew 150
 With love, which is as fire, sweet daughter mine,
 For such is that within thine own. Run, wayward,
 And guide this company beyond the peak

Of Bacchic Nysa, Mænad-haunted mountain,
And beyond Indus and its tribute rivers,
Trampling the torrent streams and glassy lakes
With feet unwet, unwearied, undelaying,
And up the green ravine, across the vale,
Beside the windless and crystalline pool,
Where ever lies, on unerasing waves, 160
The image of a temple, built above,
Distinct with column, arch, and architrave,
And palm-like capital, and over-wrought,
And populous with most living imagery,
Praxitelean shapes, whose marble smiles
Fill the hushed air with everlasting love.
It is deserted now, but once it bore
Thy name, Prometheus ; there the emulous youths
Bore to thy honour through the divine gloom
The lamp which was thine emblem ; even as those 170
Who bear the untransmitted torch of hope
Into the grave, across the night of life,
As thou hast borne it most triumphantly
To this far goal of Time. Depart, farewell.
Beside that temple is the destined cave.

SCENE IV.—*A Forest. In the Background a Cave. PROMETHEUS, ASIA, PANTHEA, IONE, and the SPIRIT OF THE EARTH.*

IONE. Sister, it is not earthly : how it glides
Under the leaves ! how on its head there burns
A light, like a green star, whose emerald beams
Are twined with its fair hair ! how, as it moves.

The splendour drops in flakes upon the grass
Knowest thou it ?

PANTHEA. It is the delicate spirit
That guides the earth through heaven. From afar
The populous constellations call that light
The loveliest of the planets ; and sometimes
It floats along the spray of the salt sea, 10
Or makes its chariot of a foggy cloud,
Or walks through fields or cities while men sleep,
Or o'er the mountain tops, or down the rivers,
Or through the green waste wilderness, as now,
Wondering at all it sees. Before Jove reigned
It loved our sister Asia, and it came
Each leisure hour to drink the liquid light
Out of her eyes, for which it said it thirsted
As one bit by a dipsas, and with her
It made its childish confidence, and told her 20
All it had known or seen, for it saw much,
Yet idly reasoned what it saw ; and called her—
For whence it sprung it knew not, nor do I—
Mother, dear mother.

The SPIRIT OF THE EARTH (running to ASIA). Mother,
dearest mother ;
May I then talk with thee as I was wont ?
May I then hide my eyes in thy soft arms,
After thy looks have made them tired of joy ?
May I then play beside thee the long noons,
When work is none in the bright silent air ?

ASIA. I love thee, gentlest being, and henceforth 30
Can cherish thee unenvied : speak, I pray :
Thy simple talk once solaced, now delights.

SPIRIT OF THE EARTH. Mother, I am grown wiser,
though a child

Cannot be wise like thee, within this day ;
And happier too ; happier and wiser both.
Thou knowest that toads, and snakes, and loathly worms,
And venomous and malicious beasts, and boughs
That bore ill berries in the woods, were ever
An hindrance to my walks o'er the green world :
And that, among the haunts of humankind, 40
Hard-featured men, or with proud, angry looks,
Or cold, staid gait, or false and hollow smiles,
Or the dull sneer of self-loved ignorance,
Or other such foul masks, with which ill thoughts
Hide that fair being whom we spirits call man ;
And women too, ugliest of all things evil,
(Though fair, even in a world where thou art fair,
When good and kind, free and sincere like thee),
When false or frowning made me sick at heart
To pass them, though they slept, and I unseen. 50
Well, my path lately lay through a great city
Into the woody hills surrounding it :
A sentinel was sleeping at the gate :
When there was heard a sound, so loud, it shook
The towers amid the moonlight, yet more sweet
Than any voice but thine, sweetest of all ;
A long, long sound, as it would never end :
And all the inhabitants leaped suddenly
Out of their rest, and gathered in the streets,
Looking in wonder up to Heaven, while yet 60
The music pealed along. I hid myself
Within a fountain in the public square,

Where I lay like the reflex of the moon
Seen in a wave under green leaves ; and soon
Those ugly human shapes and visages
Of which I spoke as having wrought me pain,
Passed floating through the air, and fading still
Into the winds that scattered them ; and those
From whom they passed seemed mild and lovely forms
After some foul disguise had fallen, and all 70
Were somewhat changed, and after brief surprise
And greetings of delighted wonder, all
Went to their sleep again : and when the dawn
Came, wouldest thou think that toads, and snakes, and
efts,
Could e'er be beautiful ? yet so they were,
And that with little change of shape or hue :
All things had put their evil nature off :
I cannot tell my joy, when o'er a lake
Upon a drooping bough with nightshade twined,
I saw two azure halcyons clinging downward 80
And thinning one bright bunch of amber berries,
With quick long beaks, and in the deep there lay
Those lovely forms imaged as in a sky ;
So, with my thoughts full of these happy changes,
We meet again, the happiest change of all.

ASIA. And never will we part, till thy chaste sister
Who guides the frozen and inconstant moon
Will look on thy more warm and equal light
Till her heart thaw like flakes of April snow
And love thee.

SPIRIT OF THE EARTH. What ; as Asia loves Pro-
metheus ? 90

ASIA. Peace, wanton, thou art yet not old enough.
 Think ye by gazing on each other's eyes
 To multiply your lovely selves, and fill
 With spherèd fires the interlunar air ?

SPIRIT OF THE EARTH. Nay, mother, while my sister
 trims her lamp
 'Tis hard I should go darkling.

ASIA. Listen ; look !

[*The SPIRIT OF THE HOUR enters.*

PROMETHEUS. We feel what thou hast heard and seen :
 yet speak.

SPIRIT OF THE HOUR. Soon as the sound had ceased
 whose thunder filled
 The abysses of the sky and the wide earth,
 There was a change : the impalpable thin air 100
 And the all-circling sunlight were transformed,
 As if the sense of love dissolved in them
 Had folded itself round the spherèd world.
 My vision then grew clear, and I could see
 Into the mysteries of the universe :
 Dizzy as with delight I floated down,
 Winnowing the lightsome air with languid plumes,
 My coursers sought their birthplace in the sun,
 Where they henceforth will live exempt from toil,
 Pasturing flowers of vegetable fire ; 110
 And where my moonlike car will stand within
 A temple, gazed upon by Phidian forms
 Of thee, and Asia, and the Earth, and me,
 And you fair nymphs looking the love we feel,—
 In memory of the tidings it has borne,—
 Beneath a dome fretted with graven flowers,

Poised on twelve columns of resplendent stone,
And open to the bright and liquid sky.
Yoked to it by an amphisbaenic snake
The likeness of those wingèd steeds will mock 120
The flight from which they find repose. Alas,
Whither has wandered now my partial tongue
When all remains untold which ye would hear ?
As I have said, I floated to the earth :
It was, as it is still, the pain of bliss
To move, to breathe, to be ; I wandering went
Among the haunts and dwellings of mankind,
And first was disappointed not to see
Such mighty change as I had felt within
Expressed in outward things ; but soon I looked, 130
And behold, thrones were kingless, and men walked
One with the other even as spirits do,
None fawned, none trampled ; hate, disdain, or fear,
Self-love, or self-contempt, on human brows
No more inscribed, as o'er the gate of hell,
' All hope abandon ye who enter here ; '
None frowned, none trembled, none with eager fear
Gazed on another's eye of cold command,
Until the subject of a tyrant's will
Became, worse fate, the abject of his own, 140
Which spurred him, like an outspent horse, to death.
None wrought his lips in truth-entangling lines
Which smiled the lie his tongue disdained to speak ;
None, with firm sneer, trod out in his own heart
The sparks of love and hope till there remained
Those bitter ashes, a soul self-consumed,
And the wretch crept a vampire among men,

Infecting all with his own hideous ill ;
None talked that common, false, cold, hollow talk
Which makes the heart deny the *yes* it breathes, 150
Yet question that unmeant hypocrisy
With such a self-mistrust as has no name.
And women, too, frank, beautiful, and kind
As the free heaven which rains fresh light and dew
On the wide earth, past ; gentle radiant forms,
From custom's evil taint exempt and pure ;
Speaking the wisdom once they could not think,
Looking emotions once they feared to feel,
And changed to all which once they dared not be,
Yet being now, made earth like heaven ; nor pride, 160
Nor jealousy, nor envy, nor ill shame,
The bitterest of those drops of treasured gall,
Spoilt the sweet taste of the nepenthe, love.

Thrones, altars, judgement-seats, and prisons ; wherein,
And beside which, by wretched men were borne
Sceptres, tiaras, swords, and chains, and tomes
Of reasoned wrong, glazed on by ignorance,
Were like those monstrous and barbaric shapes,
The ghosts of a no-more-remembered fame,
Which, from their unworn obelisks, look forth 170
In triumph o'er the palaces and tombs
Of those who were their conquerors, mouldering round.
These imaged to the pride of kings and priests
A dark yet mighty faith, a power as wide
As is the world it wasted, and are now
But an astonishment ; even so the tools
And emblems of its last captivity,

Amid the dwellings of the peopled earth,
Stand, not o'erthrown, but unregarded now.
And those foul shapes, abhorred by god and man,— 180
Which, under many a name and many a form
Strange, savage, ghastly, dark and execrable,
Were Jupiter, the tyrant of the world ;
And which the nations, panic-stricken, served
With blood, and hearts broken by long hope, and love
Dragged to his altars soiled and garlandless,
And slain amid men's unreclaiming tears,
Flattering the thing they feared, which fear was hate,—
Frown, mouldering fast, o'er their abandoned shrines :
The painted veil, by those who were, called life, 190
Which mimicked, as with colours idly spread,
All men believed or hoped, is torn aside ;
The loathsome mask has fallen, the man remains
Sceptreless, free, uncircumscribed, but man
Equal, unclassed, tribeless, and nationless,
Exempt from awe, worship, degree, the king
Over himself ; just, gentle, wise : but man
Passionless ?—no, yet free from guilt or pain,
Which were, for his will made or suffered them,
Nor yet exempt, though ruling them like slaves, 200
From chance, and death, and mutability,
The clogs of that which else might oversoar
The loftiest star of unascended heaven,
Pinnacled dim in the intense inane.

ACT IV.

SCENE.—*A Part of the Forest near the Cave of PROMETHEUS.*

PANTHEA and IONE are sleeping : they awaken gradually during the first Song.

VOICE OF UNSEEN SPIRITS.

The pale stars are gone !
 For the sun, their swift shepherd,
 To their folds them compelling,
 In the depths of the dawn,
 Hastes, in meteor-eclipsing array, and they flee
 Beyond his blue dwelling,
 As fawns flee the leopard.
 But where are ye ?

A Train of dark Forms and Shadows passes by confusedly, singing.

Here, oh, here :
 We bear the bier
 Of the Father of many a cancelled year !
 Spectres we
 Of the dead Hours be,
 We bear Time to his tomb in eternity.

Strew, oh, strew
 Hair, not yew !
 Wet the dusty pall with tears, not dew !
 Be the faded flowers
 Of Death's bare bowers
 Spread on the corpse of the King of Hours !

10

20

Haste, oh, haste !
As shades are chased,
Trembling, by day, from heaven's blue waste.
We melt away,
Like dissolving spray,
From the children of a diviner day,
With the lullaby
Of winds that die
On the bosom of their own harmony !

IONE.

What dark forms were they ?

30

PANTHEA.

The past Hours weak and gray,
With the spoil which their toil
Raked together
From the conquest but One could foil.

IONE.

Have they passed ?

PANTHEA.

They have passed ;
They outspeeded the blast,
While 'tis said, they are fled :

IONE.

Whither, oh, whither ?

PANTHEA.

To the dark, to the past, to the dead.

VOICE OF UNSEEN SPIRITS.

Bright clouds float in heaven, 40
 Dew-stars gleam on earth,
 Waves assemble on ocean,
 They are gathered and driven
 By the storm of delight, by the panic of glee !
 They shake with emotion,
 They dance in their mirth.
 But where are ye ?

The pine boughs are singing
 Old songs with new gladness,
 The billows and fountains 50
 Fresh music are flinging,
 Like the notes of a spirit from land and from sea ;
 The storms mock the mountains
 With the thunder of gladness.
 But where are ye ?

IONE. What charioteers are these ?

PANTHEA. Where are their chariots ?

SEMICHORUS OF HOURS.

The voice of the Spirits of Air and of Earth
 Have drawn back the figured curtain of sleep
 Which covered our being and darkened our birth
 In the deep.

A VOICE.
 In the deep ?

SEMICHORUS II.

Oh, below the deep. 60

SEMICHORUS I.

An hundred ages we had been kept
Cradled in visions of hate and care,
And each one who waked as his brother slept,
Found the truth—

SEMICHORUS II.

Worse than his visions were !

SEMICHORUS I.

We have heard the lute of Hope in sleep ;
We have known the voice of Love in dreams ;
We have felt the wand of Power, and leap—

SEMICHORUS II.

As the billows leap in the morning beams !

CHORUS.

Weave the dance on the floor of the breeze,
Pierce with song heaven's silent light,
Enchant the day that too swiftly flees,
To check its flight ere the cave of Night.

70

Once the hungry Hours were hounds
Which chased the day like a bleeding deer,
And it limped and stumbled with many wounds
Through the nightly dells of the desert year.

But now, oh weave the mystic measure
Of music, and dance, and shapes of light,
Let the Hours, and the spirits of might and pleasure,
Like the clouds and sunbeams, unite.

A VOICE.

Unite ! 80

PANTHEA. See, where the Spirits of the human
mind

Wrapped in sweet sounds, as in bright veils, approach.

CHORUS OF SPIRITS.

We join the throng
Of the dance and the song,
By the whirlwind of gladness borne along ;
As the flying-fish leap
From the Indian deep,
And mix with the sea-birds, half asleep.

CHORUS OF HOURS.

Whence come ye, so wild and so fleet,
For sandals of lightning are on your feet,
And your wings are soft and swift as thought,
And your eyes are as love which is veilèd not ? 90

CHORUS OF SPIRITS.

We come from the mind
Of human kind
Which was late so dusk, and obscene, and blind,
Now 'tis an ocean
Of clear emotion,
A heaven of serene and mighty motion.

From that deep abyss
Of wonder and bliss,
Whose caverns are crystal palaces ;
From those skiey towers 100

Where Thought's crowned powers
Sit watching your dance, ye happy Hours !

From the dim recesses
Of woven caresses,
Where lovers catch ye by your loose tresses ;
From the azure isles,
Where sweet Wisdom smiles,
Delaying your ships with her siren wiles.

110

From the temples high
Of Man's ear and eye,
Roofed over Sculpture and Poesy ;
From the murmurings
Of the unsealed springs
Where Science bedews her Dædal wings.

Years after years,
Through blood, and tears,
And a thick hell of hatreds, and hopes, and fears ;
We waded and flew,
And the islets were few
Where the bud-blighted flowers of happiness grew.

120

Our feet now, every palm,
Are sandalled with calm,
And the dew of our wings is a rain of balm ;
And, beyond our eyes,
The human love lies
Which makes all it gazes on Paradise.

CHORUS OF SPIRITS AND HOURS.

Then weave the web of the mystic measure ;
From the depths of the sky and the ends of the earth,

Come, swift Spirits of might and of pleasure, 131
 Fill the dance and the music of mirth,
 As the waves of a thousand streams rush by
 To an ocean of splendour and harmony !

CHORUS OF SPIRITS.

Our spoil is won,
 Our task is done,
 We are free to dive, or soar, or run ;
 Beyond and around,
 Or within the bound
 Which clips the world with darkness round. 140

We'll pass the eyes
 Of the starry skies
 Into the hoar deep to colonize :
 Death, Chaos, and Night,
 From the sound of our flight,
 Shall flee, like mist from a tempest's might.
 And Earth, Air, and Light,
 And the Spirit of Might,
 Which drives round the stars in their fiery flight ;
 And Love, Thought, and Breath, 150
 The powers that quell Death,
 Wherever we soar shall assemble beneath.

And our singing shall build
 In the void's loose field
 A world for the Spirit of Wisdom to wield ;
 We will take our plan
 From the new world of man,
 And our work shall be called the Promethean.

CHORUS OF HOURS.

Break the dance, and scatter the song;

Let some depart, and some remain.

160

SEMICHORUS I.

We, beyond heaven, are driven along:

SEMICHORUS II.

Us the enchantments of earth retain:

SEMICHORUS I.

Ceaseless, and rapid, and fierce, and free,

With the Spirits which build a new earth and sea,

And a heaven where yet heaven could never be.

SEMICHORUS II.

Solemn, and slow, and serene, and bright,

Leading the Day and outspeeding the Night,

With the powers of a world of perfect light.

SEMICHORUS I.

We whirl, singing loud, round the gathering sphere,

Till the trees, and the beasts, and the clouds appear

From its chaos made calm by love, not fear.

SEMICHORUS II.

We encircle the ocean and mountains of earth,

And the happy forms of its death and birth

Change to the music of our sweet mirth.

CHORUS OF HOURS AND SPIRITS.

Break the dance, and scatter the song,

Let some depart, and some remain,

Wherever we fly we lead along
 In leashes, like starbeams, soft yet strong,
 The clouds that are heavy with love's sweet rain.

PANTHEA. Ha ! they are gone !

IONE. Yet feel you no delight 180
 From the past sweetness ?

PANTHEA. As the bare green hill
 When some soft cloud vanishes into rain,
 Laughs with a thousand drops of sunny water
 To the unpavilioned sky !

IONE. Even whilst we speak
 New notes arise. What is that awful sound ?

PANTHEA. 'Tis the deep music of the rolling world
 Kindling within the strings of the waved air
 Æolian modulations.

IONE. Listen too,
 How every pause is filled with under-notes,
 Clear, silver, icy, keen, awakening tones, 190
 Which pierce the sense, and live within the soul,
 As the sharp stars pierce winter's crystal air
 And gaze upon themselves within the sea.

PANTHEA. But see where through two openings in the
 forest
 Which hanging branches overcanopy,
 And where two runnels of a rivulet,
 Between the close moss violet-inwoven,
 Have made their path of melody, like sisters
 Who part with sighs that they may meet in smiles,
 Turning their dear disunion to an isle 200
 Of lovely grief, a wood of sweet sad thoughts ;

Two visions of strange radiance float upon
The ocean-like enchantment of strong sound,
Which flows intenser, keener, deeper yet
Under the ground and through the windless air.

IONE. I see a chariot like that thinnest boat,
In which the Mother of the Months is borne
By ebbing light into her western cave,

When she upsprings from interlunar dreams ;
O'er which is curved an orblike canopy

210

Of gentle darkness, and the hills and woods.
Distinctly seen through that dusk airy veil,

Regard like shapes in an enchanter's glass ;
Its wheels are solid clouds, azure and gold,
Such as the genii of the thunderstorm

Pile on the floor of the illumined sea

When the sun rushes under it ; they roll

And move and grow as with an inward wind ;

Within it sits a wingèd infant, white

Its countenance, like the whiteness of bright snow, 220

Its plumes are as feathers of sunny frost,

Its limbs gleam white, through the wind-flowing folds
Of its white robe, woof of ethereal pearl.

Its hair is white, the brightness of white light

Scattered in strings ; yet its two eyes are heavens

Of liquid darkness, which the Deity

Within seems pouring, as a storm is poured

From jaggèd clouds, out of their arrowy lashes,

Tempering the cold and radiant air around,

With fire that is not brightness ; in its hand

230

It sways a quivering moonbeam, from whose point

A guiding power directs the chariot's prow

Over its wheeled clouds, which as they roll
Over the grass, and flowers, and waves, wake sounds,
Sweet as a singing rain of silver dew.

PANTHEA. And from the other opening in the wood
Rushes, with loud and whirlwind harmony,
A sphere, which is as many thousand spheres,
Solid as crystal, yet through all its mass
Flow, as through empty space, music and light : 240
Ten thousand orbs involving and involved,
Purple and azure, white, and green, and golden,
Sphere within sphere ; and every space between
Peopled with unimaginable shapes,
Such as ghosts dream dwell in the lampless deep,
Yet each inter-transpicuous, and they whirl
Over each other with a thousand motions,
Upon a thousand sightless axles spinning,
And with the force of self-destroying swiftness,
Intensely, slowly, solemnly roll on, 250
Kindling with mingled sounds, and many tones,
Intelligible words and music wild.
With mighty whirl the multitudinous orb
Grinds the bright brook into an azure mist
Of elemental subtlety, like light ;
And the wild odour of the forest flowers,
The music of the living grass and air,
The emerald light of leaf-entangled beams
Round its intense yet self-conflicting speed,
Seem kneaded into one aëreal mass 260
Which drowns the sense. Within the orb itself,
Pilloved upon its alabaster arms,
Like to a child o'erwearied with sweet toil,

On its own folded wings, and wavy hair,
The Spirit of the Earth is laid asleep,
And you can see its little lips are moving,
Amid the changing light of their own smiles,
Like one who talks of what he loves in dream.

IONE. 'Tis only mocking the orb's harmony.

PANTHEA. And from a star upon its forehead, shoot, 271
Like swords of azure fire, or golden spears
With tyrant-quelling myrtle overtwined,
Embleming heaven and earth united now,
Vast beams like spokes of some invisible wheel
Which whirl as the orb whirls, swifter than thought,
Filling the abyss with sun-like lightenings,
And perpendicular now, and now transverse,
Pierce the dark soil, and as they pierce and pass,
Make bare the secrets of the earth's deep heart ;
Infinite mines of adamant and gold, 280
Valueless stones, and unimagined gems,
And caverns on crystalline columns poised
With vegetable silver overspread ;
Wells of unfathomed fire, and water springs
Whence the great sea even as a child is fed,
Whose vapours clothe earth's monarch mountain-tops
With kingly, ermine snow. The beams flash on
And make appear the melancholy ruins
Of cancelled cycles ; anchors, beaks of ships ;
Planks turned to marble ; quivers, helms, and spears, 290
And gorgon-headed targes, and the wheels
Of scythèd chariots, and the emblazonry
Of trophies, standards, and armorial beasts,
Round which death laughed, sepulchred emblems.

Of dead destruction, ruin within ruin !
 The wrecks beside of many a city vast,
 Whose population which the earth grew over
 Was mortal, but not human ; see, they lie,
 Their monstrous works, and uncouth skeletons,
 Their statues, homes and fanes ; prodigious shapes 300
 Huddled in gray annihilation, split,
 Jammed in the hard, black deep ; and over these,
 The anatomies of unknown wingèd things,
 And fishes which were isles of living scale,
 And serpents, bony chains, twisted around
 The iron crags, or within heaps of dust
 To which the tortuous strength of their last pangs
 Had crushed the iron crags ; and over these
 The jaggèd alligator, and the might
 Of earth-convulsing behemoth, which once 310
 Were monarch beasts, and on the slimy shores,
 And weed-overgrown continents of earth,
 Increased and multiplied like summer worms
 On an abandoned corpse, till the blue globe
 Wrapped deluge round it like a cloak, and they
 Yelled, gasped, and were abolished ; or some God
 Whose throne was in a comet, passed, and cried,
 'Be not !' And like my words they were no more.

THE EARTH.

The joy, the triumph, the delight, the madness !
 The boundless, overflowing, bursting gladness, 320
 The vaporous exultation not to be confined !
 Ha ! ha ! the animation of delight
 Which wraps me, like an atmosphere of light,
 And bears me as a cloud is borne by its own wind.

THE MOON.

Brother mine, calm wanderer,
Happy globe of land and air,
Some Spirit is darted like a beam from thee,
Which penetrates my frozen frame,
And passes with the warmth of flame,
With love, and odour, and deep melody
Through me, through me !

330

THE EARTH.

Ha ! ha ! the caverns of my hollow mountains,
My cloven fire-crags, sound-exulting fountains
Laugh with a vast and inextinguishable laughter.
The oceans, and the deserts, and the abysses,
And the deep air's unmeasured wildernesses,
Answer from all their clouds and billows, echoing after.

They cry aloud as I do. Sceptred curse,
Who all our green and azure universe
Threatenedst to muffle round with black destruction,
sending
A solid cloud to rain hot thunderstones,
And splinter and knead down my children's bones,
All I bring forth, to one void mass battering and blend-
ing,—

340

Until each crag-like tower, and storied column,
Palace, and obelisk, and temple solemn,
My imperial mountains crowned with cloud, and snow,
and fire ;
My sea-like forests, every blade and blossom

Which finds a grave or cradle in my bosom,
Were stamped by thy strong hate into a lifeless mire :

How art thou sunk, withdrawn, covered, drunk up 350
By thirsty nothing, as the brackish cup
Drained by a desert-troop, a little drop for all ;
And from beneath, around, within, above,
Filling thy void annihilation, love
Burst in like light on caves cloven by the thunder-ball.

THE MOON.

The snow upon my lifeless mountains
Is loosened into living fountains,
My solid oceans flow, and sing, and shine :
A spirit from my heart bursts forth,
It clothes with unexpected birth 360
My cold bare bosom : Oh ! it must be thine
On mine, on mine !

Gazing on thee I feel, I know
Green stalks burst forth, and bright flowers grow,
And living shapes upon my bosom move :
Music is in the sea and air,
Wingèd clouds soar here and there,
Dark with the rain new buds are dreaming of :
'Tis love, all love !

THE EARTH.

It interpenetrates my granite mass, 370
Through tangled roots and trodden clay doth pass
Into the utmost leaves and delicatest flowers ;
Upon the winds, among the clouds 'tis spread,

It wakes a life in the forgotten dead,
They breathe a spirit up from their obscurest bowers.

And like a storm bursting its cloudy prison
With thunder, and with whirlwind, has arisen
Out of the lampless caves of unimagined being :
With earthquake shock and swiftness making shiver
Thought's stagnant chaos, unremoved for ever, 380
Till hate, and fear, and pain, light-vanquished shadows,
fleeing,

Leave Man, who was a many-sided mirror,
Which could distort to many a shape of error,
This true fair world of things, a sea reflecting love ;
Which over all his kind, as the sun's heaven
Gliding o'er ocean, smooth, serene, and even,
Darting from starry depths radiance and life, doth move :

Leave Man, even as a leprous child is left,
Who follows a sick beast to some warm cleft
Of rocks, through which the might of healing springs is
poured ; 390
Then when it wanders home with rosy smile,
Unconscious, and its mother fears awhile
It is a spirit, then, weeps on her child restored.

Man, oh, not men ! a chain of linkèd thought,
Of love and might to be divided not,
Compelling the elements with adamantine stress ;
As the sun rules, even with a tyrant's gaze,
The unquiet republic of the maze
Of planets, struggling fierce towards heaven's free wilder-
ness.

Man, one harmonious soul of many a soul, 406
 Whose nature is its own divine control,
 Where all things flow to all, as rivers to the sea ;
 Familiar acts are beautiful through love ;
 Labour, and pain, and grief, in life's green grove
 Sport like tame beasts, none knew how gentle they could
 be !

His will, with all mean passions, bad delights,
 And selfish cares, its trembling satellites,
 A spirit ill to guide, but mighty to obey,
 Is as a tempest-wingèd ship, whose helm
 Love rules, through waves which dare not over-
 whelm, 410
 Forcing life's wildest shores to own its sovereign sway.

All things confess his strength. Through the cold mass
 Of marble and of colour his dreams pass ;
 Bright threads whence mothers weave the robes their
 children wear ;
 Language is a perpetual Orphic song,
 Which rules with Dædal harmony a throng
 Of thoughts and forms, which else senseless and shapeless
 were.

The lightning is his slave ; heaven's utmost deep
 Gives up her stars, and like a flock of sheep
 They pass before his eye, are numbered, and roll on ! 420
 The tempest is his steed, he strides the air ;
 And the abyss shouts from her depth laid bare,
 Heaven, hast thou secrets ? Man unveils me ; I have
 none.

THE MOON.

The shadow of white death has passed
From my path in heaven at last,
A clinging shroud of solid frost and sleep ;
And through my newly-woven bowers,
Wander happy paramours,
Less mighty, but as mild as those who keep
Thy vales more deep.

430

THE EARTH.

As the dissolving warmth of dawn may fold
A half unfrozen dew-globe, green, and gold,
And crystalline, till it becomes a wingèd mist,
And wanders up the vault of the blue day,
Outlives the moon, and on the sun's last ray
Hangs o'er the sea, a fleece of fire and amethyst.

THE MOON.

THE EARTH.

I spin beneath my pyramid of night,
Which points into the heavens dreaming delight,
Murmuring victorious joy in my enchanted sleep ;
As a youth lulled in love-dreams faintly sighing,

Under the shadow of his beauty lying,
 Which round his rest a watch of light and warmth
 doth keep.

THE MOON.

As in the soft and sweet eclipse, 450
 When soul meets soul on lovers' lips,
 High hearts are calm, and brightest eyes are dull ;
 So when thy shadow falls on me,
 Then am I mute and still, by thee
 Covered ; of thy love, Orb most beautiful,
 Full, oh, too full !

Thou art speeding round the sun
 Brightest world of many a one ;
 Green and azure sphere which shinest
 With a light which is divinest 460
 Among all the lamps of Heaven
 To whom life and light is given ;
 I, thy crystal paramour
 Borne beside thee by a power
 Like the polar Paradise,
 Magnet-like of lovers' eyes ;
 I, a most enamoured maiden
 Whose weak brain is overladen
 With the pleasure of her love,
 Maniac-like around thee move 470
 Gazing, an insatiate bride,
 On thy form from every side
 Like a Mænad, round the cup
 Which Agave lifted up
 In the weird Cadmæan forest.

Brother, wheresoe'er thou soarest
I must hurry, whirl and follow
Through the heavens wide and hollow,
Sheltered by the warm embrace
Of thy soul from hungry space, 480
Drinking from thy sense and sight
Beauty, majesty, and might,
As a lover or a chameleon
Grows like what it looks upon,
As a violet's gentle eye
Gazes on the azure sky
Until its hue grows like what it beholds,
As a gray and watery mist
Glowes like solid amethyst
Athwart the western mountain it enfolds, 490
When the sunset sleeps
Upon its snow—

THE EARTH.

And the weak day weeps
That it should be so.
Oh, gentle Moon, the voice of thy delight
Falls on me like thy clear and tender light
Soothing the seaman, borne the summer night,
Through isles for ever calm ;
Oh, gentle Moon, thy crystal accents pierce
The caverns of my pride's deep universe, 500
Charming the tiger joy, whose trampings fierce
Made wounds which need thy balm.

PANTHEA. I rise as from a bath of sparkling water,
A bath of azure light, among dark rocks,

Out of the stream of sound.

IONE. Ah me ! sweet sister,
The stream of sound has ebbed away from us,
And you pretend to rise out of its wave,
Because your words fall like the clear, soft dew
Shaken from a bathing wood-nymph's limbs and hair.

PANTHEA. Peace peace ! A mighty Power, which
is as darkness, 510
Is rising out of Earth, and from the sky
Is showered like night, and from within the air
Bursts, like eclipse which had been gathered up
Into the pores of sunlight : the bright visions,
Wherein the singing spirits rode and shone,
Gleam like pale meteors through a watery night.

IONE. There is a sense of words upon mine ear.

PANTHEA. An universal sound like words : Oh, list !

DEMOGORGON.

Thou, Earth, calm empire of a happy soul,
Sphere of divinest shapes and harmonies, 520
Beautiful orb ! gathering as thou dost roll
The love which paves thy path along the skies :

THE EARTH.

I hear : I am as a drop of dew that dies.

DEMOGORGON.

Thou, Moon, which gazest on the nightly Earth
With wonder, as it gazes upon thee ;
Whilst each to men, and beasts, and the swift birth
Of birds, is beauty, love, calm, harmony :

THE Moon.

I hear : I am a leaf shaken by thee !

DEMOGORGON.

Ye Kings of suns and stars, Dæmons and Gods,
Aetherial Dominations, who possess
Elysian, windless, fortunate abodes
Beyond Heaven's constellated wilderness :

530

A VOICE FROM ABOVE.

Our great Republic hears, we are blest, and bless.

DEMOGORGON.

Ye happy Dead, whom beams of brightest verse
Are clouds to hide, not colours to portray,
Whether your nature is that universe
Which once ye saw and suffered—

A VOICE FROM BENEATH.

Or as they
Whom we have left, we change and pass away.

DEMOGORGON.

Ye elemental Genii, who have homes
From man's high mind even to the central stone 540
Of sullen lead ; from heaven's star-fretted domes
To the dull weed some sea-worm battens on :

A CONFUSED VOICE.

We hear : thy words waken Oblivion.

DEMOGORGON.

Spirits, whose homes are flesh : ye beasts and birds,

Ye worms, and fish ; ye living leaves and buds ;
 Lightning and wind ; and ye untameable herds,
 Meteors and mists, which throng air's solitudes :—

A VOICE.

Thy voice to us is wind among still woods.

DEMOGORGON.

Man, who wert once a despot and a slave ;
 A dupe and a deceiver ; a decay ; 550
 A traveller from the cradle to the grave
 Through the dim night of this immortal day :

ALL.

Speak : thy strong words may never pass away.

DEMOGORGON.

This is the day, which down the void abyssm
 At the Earth-born's spell yawns for Heaven's despotism,
 And Conquest is dragged captive through the deep :
 Love, from its awful throne of patient power
 In the wise heart, from the last giddy hour
 Of dread endurance, from the slippery, steep,
 And narrow verge of crag-like agony, springs 500
 And folds over the world its healing wings.

Gentleness, Virtue, Wisdom, and Endurance,
 These are the seals of that most firm assurance
 Which bars the pit over Destruction's strength ;
 And if, with infirm hand, Eternity,
 Mother of many acts and hours, should free
 The serpent that would clasp her with his length ;
 These are the spells by which to reassume
 An empire o'er the disentangled doom.

To suffer woes which Hope thinks infinite ;
To forgive wrongs darker than death or night ;

To defy power, which seems omnipotent ;
To love, and bear ; to hope till Hope creates
From its own wreck the thing it contemplates ;

Neither to change, nor falter, nor repent ;
This, like thy glory, Titan, is to be
Good, great and joyous, beautiful and free ;
This is alone Life, Joy, Empire, and Victory.

MISCELLANEOUS POEMS.

THE SENSITIVE PLANT.

PART FIRST.

A SENSITIVE Plant in a garden grew,
And the young winds fed it with silver dew,
And it opened its fan-like leaves to the light,
And closed them beneath the kisses of Night.

And the Spring arose on the garden fair,
Like the Spirit of Love felt everywhere ;
And each flower and herb on Earth's dark breast
Rose from the dreams of its wintry rest.

But none ever trembled and panted with bliss
In the garden, the field, or the wilderness, 10
Like a doe in the noontide with love's sweet want,
As the companionless Sensitive Plant.

The snowdrop, and then the violet,
Arose from the ground with warm rain wet,
And their breath was mixed with fresh odour, sent
From the turf, like the voice and the instrument.

Then the pied wind-flowers and the tulip tall,
And narcissi, the fairest among them all,
Who gaze on their eyes in the stream's recess,
Till they die of their own dear loveliness ; 20

And the Naiad-like lily of the vale,
 Whom youth makes so fair and passion so pale
 That the light of its tremulous bells is seen
 Through their pavilions of tender green ;

And the hyacinth purple, and white, and blue,
 Which flung from its bells a sweet peal anew
 Of music so delicate, soft, and intense,
 It was felt like an odour within the sense ;

And the rose like a nymph to the bath addressed,
 Which unveiled the depth of her glowing breast, 30
 Till, fold after fold, to the fainting air
 The soul of her beauty and love lay bare :

And the wand-like lily, which lifted up,
 As a Maenad, its moonlight-coloured cup,
 Till the fiery star, which is its eye,
 Gazed through clear dew on the tender sky ;

And the jessamine faint, and the sweet tuberose,
 The sweetest flower for scent that blows ;
 And all rare blossoms from every clime
 Grew in that garden in perfect prime. 40

And on the stream whose inconstant bosom
 Was pranked, under boughs of embowering blossom,
 With golden and green light, slanting through
 Their heaven of many a tangled hue,

Broad water-lilies lay tremulously,
 And starry river-buds glimmered by,
 And around them the soft stream did glide and dance
 With a motion of sweet sound and radiance.

And the sinuous paths of lawn and of moss,
 Which led through the garden along and across, 50
 Some open at once to the sun and the breeze,
 Some lost among bowers of blossoming trees,
 Were all paved with daisies and delicate bells
 As fair as the fabulous asphodels,
 And flow'rets which, drooping as day drooped too,
 Fell into pavilions, white, purple, and blue,
 To roof the glow-worm from the evening dew.

And from this undefilèd Paradise
 The flowers (as an infant's awakening eyes
 Smile on its mother, whose singing sweet 60
 Can first lull, and at last must awaken it),
 When Heaven's blithe winds had unfolded them,
 As mine-lamps enkindle a hidden gem,
 Shone smiling to Heaven, and every one
 Shared joy in the light of the gentle sun ;
 For each one was interpenetrated
 With the light and the odour its neighbour shed,
 Like young lovers whom youth and love make dear
 Wrapped and filled by their mutual atmosphere.

But the Sensitive Plant which could give small fruit 70
 Of the love which it felt from the leaf to the root,
 Received more than all, it loved more than ever,
 Where none wanted but it, could belong to the giver,—
 For the Sensitive Plant has no bright flower ;
 Radiance and odour are not its dower ;
 It loves, even like Love, its deep heart is full,
 It desires what it has not, the Beautiful !

The light winds which from unsustaining wings
Shed the music of many murmurings ;
The beams which dart from many a star
Of the flowers whose hues they bear afar ;

80

The plumèd insects swift and free,
Like golden boats on a sunny sea,
Laden with light and odour, which pass
Over the gleam of the living grass ;

The unseen clouds of the dew, which lie
Like fire in the flowers till the sun rides high,
Then wander like spirits among the spheres,
Each cloud faint with the fragrance it bears ;

The quivering vapours of dim noontide,
Which like a sea o'er the warm earth glide,
In which every sound, and odour, and beam,
Move, as reeds in a single stream ;

90

Each and all like ministering angels were
For the Sensitive Plant sweet joy to bear,
Whilst the lagging hours of the day went by
Like windless clouds o'er a tender sky.

And when evening descended from Heaven above,
And the Earth was all rest, and the air was all love,
And delight, though less bright, was far more deep, 100
And the day's veil fell from the world of sleep.

And the beasts, and the birds, and the insects were
drowned

In an ocean of dreams without a sound ;
Whose waves never mark, though they ever impress
The light sand which paves it, consciousness ;

(Only overhead the sweet nightingale
 Ever sang more sweet as the day might fail,
 And snatches of its Elysian chant
 Were mixed with the dreams of the Sensitive Plant);—

The Sensitive Plant was the earliest
 Upgathered into the bosom of rest ;
 A sweet child weary of its delight,
 The feeblest and yet the favourite,
 Cradled within the embrace of Night.

110

PART SECOND.

There was a Power in this sweet place,
 An Eve in this Eden ; a ruling Grace
 Which to the flowers, did they waken or dream,
 Was as God is to the starry scheme.

A Lady, the wonder of her kind,
 Whose form was upborne by a lovely mind
 Which, dilating, had moulded her mien and motion
 Like a sea-flower unfolded beneath the ocean,

Tended the garden from morn to even :
 And the meteors of that sublunar Heaven,
 Like the lamps of the air when Night walks forth,
 Laughed round her footsteps up from the Earth !

10

She had no companion of mortal race,
 But her tremulous breath and her flushing face
 Told, whilst the morn kissed the sleep from her eyes,
 That her dreams were less slumber than Paradise :

As if some bright Spirit for her sweet sake
Had deserted Heaven while the stars were awake,
As if yet around her he lingering were,
Though the veil of daylight concealed him from her. 20

Her step seemed to pity the grass it pressed ;
You might hear by the heaving of her breast,
That the coming and going of the wind
Brought pleasure there and left passion behind.

And wherever her aëry footstep trod,
Her trailing hair from the grassy sod
Erased its light vestige, with shadowy sweep,
Like a sunny storm o'er the dark green deep.

I doubt not the flowers of that garden sweet
Rejoiced in the sound of her gentle feet ; 30
I doubt not they felt the spirit that came
From her glowing fingers through all their frame.

She sprinkled bright water from the stream
On those that were faint with the sunny beam ;
And out of the cups of the heavy flowers
She emptied the rain of the thunder-showers.

She lifted their heads with her tender hands,
And sustained them with rods and osier-bands ;
If the flowers had been her own infants, she
Could never have nursed them more tenderly. 40

And all killing insects and gnawing worms,
And things of obscene and unlovely forms,
She bore, in a basket of Indian woof,
Into the rough woods far aloof,—

In a basket, of grasses and wild-flowers full,
The freshest her gentle hands could pull
For the poor banished insects, whose intent,
Although they did ill, was innocent.

But the bee and the beamlike ephemeras
Whose path is the lightning's, and soft moths that kiss
The sweet lips of the flowers, and harm not, did she 51
Make her attendant angels be.

And many an antenatal tomb,
Where butterflies dream of the life to come,
She left clinging round the smooth and dark
Edge of the odorous cedar bark.

This fairest creature from earliest Spring
Thus moved through the garden ministering
All the sweet season of Summertide,
And ere the first leaf looked brown—she died !

60

PART THIRD.

Three days the flowers of the garden fair
Like stars when the moon is awakened were,
Or the waves of Baiae, ere luminous
She floats up through the smoke of Vesuvius.

And on the fourth, the Sensitive Plant
Felt the sound of the funeral chant,
And the steps of the bearers, heavy and slow,
And the sobs of the mourners, deep and low;

The weary sound and the heavy breath,
And the silent motions of passing death,

10

And the smell, cold, oppressive, and dank,
Sent through the pores of the coffin-plank;

The dark grass, and the flowers among the grass,
Were bright with tears as the crowd did pass;
From their sighs the wind caught a mournful tone,
And sate in the pines, and gave groan for groan.

The garden, once fair, became cold and foul,
Like the corpse of her who had been its soul,
Which at first was lovely as if in sleep,
Then slowly changed, till it grew a heap
To make men tremble who never weep.

20

Swift Summer into the Autumn flowed,
And frost in the mist of the morning rode,
Though the noonday sun looked clear and bright,
Mocking the spoil of the secret night.

The rose-leaves, like flakes of crimson snow,
Paved the turf and the moss below.

The lilies were drooping, and white, and wan
Like the head and the skin of a dying man.

And Indian plants, of scent and hue
The sweetest that ever were fed on dew,
Leaf by leaf, day after day,
Were massed into the common clay.

30

And the leaves, brown, yellow, and gray, and red,
And white with the whiteness of what is dead,
Like troops of ghosts on the dry wind passed;
Their whistling noise made the birds aghast.

And the gusty winds waked the wingèd seeds,
Out of their birthplace of ugly weeds,
Till they clung round many a sweet flower's stem, 40
Which rotted into the earth with them.

The water-blooms under the rivulet
Fell from the stalks on which they were set ;
And the eddies drove them here and there,
As the winds did those of the upper air.

Then the rain came down, and the broken stalks
Were bent and tangled across the walks ;
And the leafless network of parasite bowers
Massed into ruin ; and all sweet flowers.

Between the time of the wind and the snow 50
All loathliest weeds began to grow,
Whose coarse leaves were splashed with many a speck,
Like the water-snake's belly and the toad's back.

And thistles, and nettles, and darnels rank,
And the dock, and henbane, and hemlock dank,
Stretched out its long and hollow shank,
And stifled the air till the dead wind stank.

And plants, at whose names the verse feels loath,
Filled the place with a monstrous undergrowth,
Prickly, and pulpous, and blistering, and blue, 60
Livid, and starred with a lurid dew.

Their moss rotted off them, flake by flake,
Till the thick stalk stuck like a murderer's stake,
Where rags of loose flesh yet tremble on high,
Infecting the winds that wander by.

And agarics, and fungi, with mildew and mould
Started like mist from the wet ground cold ;
Pale, fleshy, as if the decaying dead
With a spirit of growth had been animated !

Spawn, weeds, and filth, a leprous scum,
Made the running rivulet thick and dumb,
And at its outlet flags huge as stakes
Dammed it up with roots knotted like water-snakes

And hour by hour, when the air was still,
The vapours arose which have strength to kill ;
At morn they were seen, at noon they were felt,
At night they were darkness no star could melt.

And unctuous meteors from spray to spray
Crept and flitted in broad noonday
Unseen ; every branch on which they alit
By a venomous blight was burned and bit. 80

The Sensitive Plant, like one forbid,
Wept, and the tears within each lid
Of its folded leaves, which together grew,
Were changed to a blight of frozen glue.

For the leaves soon fell, and the branches soon
By the heavy axe of the blast were hewn ;
The sap shrank to the root through every pore
As blood to a heart that will beat no more.

For Winter came : the wind was his whip : 90
One choppy finger was on his lip :
He had torn the cataracts from the hills
And they clanked at his girdle like manacles ;

His breath was a chain which without a sound
The earth, and the air, and the water bound ;
He came, fiercely driven, in his chariot-throne
By the tenfold blasts of the Arctic zone.

Then the weeds which were forms of living death
Fled from the frost to the earth beneath.

Their decay and sudden flight from frost
Was but like the vanishing of a ghost !

100

And under the roots of the Sensitive Plant
The moles and the dormice died for want :
The birds dropped stiff from the frozen air
And were caught in the branches naked and bare.

First there came down a thawing rain
And its dull drops froze on the boughs again ;
Then there steamed up a freezing dew
Which to the drops of the thaw-rain grew ;

And a northern whirlwind, wandering about
Like a wolf that had smelt a dead child out,
Shook the boughs thus laden, and heavy, and stiff,
And snapped them off with his rigid griff.

110

When Winter had gone and Spring came back
The Sensitive Plant was a leafless wreck ;
But the mandrakes, and toadstools, and docks, and
darnels,
Rose like the dead from their ruined charnels.

CONCLUSION.

Whether the Sensitive Plant, or that
 Which within its boughs like a Spirit sat,
 Ere its outward form had known decay, 120
 Now felt this change, I cannot say.

Whether that Lady's gentle mind,
 No longer with the form combined
 Which scattered love, as stars do light,
 Found sadness, where it left delight,

I dare not guess ; but in this life
 Of error, ignorance, and strife,
 Where nothing is, but all things seem,
 And we the shadows of the dream,

It is a modest creed, and yet 130
 Pleasant if one considers it,
 To own that death itself must be,
 Like all the rest, a mockery.

That garden sweet, that lady fair,
 And all sweet shapes and odours there,
 In truth have never passed away :
 'Tis we, 'tis ours, are changed ; not they.

For love, and beauty, and delight,
 There is no death nor change : their might
 Exceeds our organs, which endure 140
 No light, being themselves obscure.

A VISION OF THE SEA.

'Tis the terror of tempest. The rags of the sail
 Are flickering in ribbons within the fierce gale :
 From the stark night of vapours the dim rain is driven,
 And when lightning is loosed, like a deluge from Heaven,
 She sees the black trunks of the waterspouts spin
 And bend, as if Heaven was ruining in,
 Which they seemed to sustain with their terrible mass
 As if ocean had sunk from beneath them : they pass
 To their graves in the deep with an earthquake of sound,
 And the waves and the thunders, made silent around, 10
 Leave the wind to its echo. The vessel, now tossed
 Through the low-trailing rack of the tempest, is lost
 In the skirts of the thunder-cloud : now down the sweep
 Of the wind-cloven wave to the chasm of the deep
 It sinks, and the walls of the watery vale
 Whose depths of dread calm are unmoved by the gale,
 Dim mirrors of ruin, hang gleaming about ;
 While the surf, like a chaos of stars, like a rout
 Of death-flames, like whirlpools of fire-flowing iron,
 With splendour and terror the black ship environ, 20
 Or like sulphur-flakes hurled from a mine of pale fire
 In fountains spout o'er it. In many a spire
 The pyramid-billows with white points of brine
 In the cope of the lightning inconstantly shine,
 As piercing the sky from the floor of the sea.
 The great ship seems splitting ! it cracks as a tree,
 While an earthquake is splintering its root, ere the blast
 Of the whirlwind that stripped it of branches has passed.
 The intense thunder-balls which are raining from Heaven

Have shattered its mast, and it stands black and riven.
The chinks suck destruction. The heavy dead hulk 31
On the living sea rolls an inanimate bulk,
Like a corpse on the clay which is hungering to fold
Its corruption around it. Meanwhile, from the hold,
One deck is burst up by the waters below,
And it splits like the ice when the thaw-breezes blow
O'er the lakes of the desert ! Who sit on the other ?
Is that all the crew that lie burying each other,
Like the dead in a breach, round the foremast ? Are
those

Twin tigers, who burst, when the waters arose, 40
In the agony of terror, their chains in the hold ;
(What now makes them tame, is what then made them
bold ;)

Who crouch, side by side, and have driven, like a crank,
The deepgrip of their claws through the vibrating plank :—
Are these all ? Nine weeks the tall vessel had lain
On the windless expanse of the watery plain,
Where the death-darting sun cast no shadow at noon,
And there seemed to be fire in the beams of the moon,
Till a lead-coloured fog gathered up from the deep, 49
Whose breath was quick pestilence ; then, the cold sleep
Crept, like blight through the ears of a thick field of corn,
O'er the populous vessel. And even and morn,
With their hammocks for coffins the seamen aghast
Like dead men the dead limbs of their comrades cast
Down the deep, which closed on them above and around,
And the sharks and the dogfish their grave-clothes un-
bound,
And were glutted like Jews with this manna rained down

From God on their wilderness. One after one
The mariners died ; on the eve of this day,
When the tempest was gathering in cloudy array, 60
But seven remained. Six the thunder has smitten,
And they lie black as mummies on which Time has written
His scorn of the embalmer ; the seventh, from the deck
An oak-splinter pierced through his breast and his back,
And hung out to the tempest, a wreck on the wreck.
No more ? At the helm sits a woman more fair
Than Heaven, when, unbinding its star-braided hair,
It sinks with the sun on the earth and the sea.
She clasps a bright child on her upgathered knee ;
It laughs at the lightning, it mocks the mixed thunder 70
Of the air and the sea, with desire and with wonder
It is beckoning the tigers to rise and come near,
It would play with those eyes where the radiance of fear
Is outshining the meteors ; its bosom beats high,
The heart-fire of pleasure has kindled its eye,
While its mother's is lustreless. 'Smile not, my child,
But sleep deeply and sweetly, and so be beguiled
Of the pang that awaits us, whatever that be,
So dreadful since thou must divide it with me !
Dream, sleep ! This pale bosom, thy cradle and bed, 80
Will it rock thee not, infant ? 'Tis beating with dread !
Alas ! what is life, what is death, what are we,
That when the ship sinks we no longer may be ?
What ! to see thee no more, and to feel thee no more ?
To be after life what we have been before ?
Not to touch those sweet hands ? Not to look on those
eyes,
Those lips, and that hair,—all the smiling disguise

Thou yet wearest, sweet Spirit, which I, day by day,
 Have so long called my child, but which now fades away
 Like a rainbow, and I the fallen shower ? —Lo ! the ship
 Is settling, it topples, the leeward ports dip ; 91
 The tigers leap up when they feel the slow brine
 Crawling inch by inch on them; hair, ears, limbs, and eyne,
 Stand rigid with horror ; a loud, long, hoarse cry
 Bursts at once from their vitals tremendously,
 And 'tis borne down the mountainous vale of the wave,
 Rebounding, like thunder, from crag to cave,
 Mixed with the clash of the lashing rain,
 Hurried on by the might of the hurricane :
 The hurricane came from the west, and passed on 100
 By the path of the gate of the eastern sun,
 Transversely dividing the stream of the storm ;
 As an arrowy serpent, pursuing the form
 Of an elephant, bursts through the brakes of the waste.
 Black as a cormorant the screaming blast,
 Between Ocean and Heaven, like an ocean, passed,
 Till it came to the clouds on the verge of the world
 Which, based on the sea and to Heaven upcurled,
 Like columns and walls did surround and sustain
 The dome of the tempest ; it rent them in twain, 110
 As a flood rends its barriers of mountainous crag :
 And the dense clouds in many a ruin and rag,
 Like the stones of a temple ere earthquake has passed,
 Like the dust of its fall, on the whirlwind are cast ;
 They are scattered like foam on the torrent ; and where
 The wind has burst out through the chasm, from the air
 Of clear morning the beams of the sunrise flow in,
 Unimpeded, keen, golden, and crystalline,

Banded armies of light and of air ; at one gate
They encounter, but interpenetrate.

120

And that breach in the tempest is widening away,
And the caverns of cloud are torn up by the day,
And the fierce winds are sinking with weary wings,
Lulled by the motion and murmurings
And the long glassy heave of the rocking sea,
And overhead glorious, but dreadful to see,
The wrecks of the tempest, like vapours of gold,
Are consuming in sunrise. The heaped waves behold
The deep calm of blue Heaven dilating above,
And, like passions made still by the presence of Love, 130
Beneath the clear surface reflecting it slide
Tremulous with soft influence ; extending its tide
From the Andes to Atlas, round mountain and isle,
Round sea-birds and wrecks, paved with Heaven's azure
smile,

The wide world of waters is vibrating. Where
Is the ship ? On the verge of the wave where it lay
One tiger is mingled in ghastly affray
With a sea-snake. The foam and the smoke of the battle
Stain the clear air with sunbows ; the jar, and the rattle
Of solid bones crushed by the infinite stress 140
Of the snake's adamantine voluminousness ;
And the hum of the hot blood that spouts and rains
Where the gripe of the tiger has wounded the veins
Swollen with rage, strength, and effort ; the whirl and
the splash
As of some hideous engine whose brazen teeth smash
The thin winds and soft waves into thunder ; the screams
And hissing crawl fast o'er the smooth ocean-streams,

Each sound like a centipede. Near this commotion,
 A blue shark is hanging within the blue ocean,
 The fin-wingèd tomb of the victor. The other 150
 Is winning his way from the fate of his brother
 To his own with the speed of despair. Lo ! a boat
 Advances ; twelve rowers with the impulse of thought
 Urge on the keen keel,—the brine foams. At the stern
 Three marksmen stand levelling. Hot bullets burn
 In the breast of the tiger, which yet bears him on
 To his refuge and ruin. One fragment alone,—
 'Tis dwindling and sinking, 'tis now almost gone,—
 Of the wreck of the vessel peers out of the sea.
 With her left hand she grasps it impetuously, 160
 With her right she sustains her fair infant. Death, Fear,
 Love, Beauty, are mixed in the atmosphere,
 Which trembles and burns with the fervour of dread
 Around her wild eyes, her bright hand, and her head,
 Like a meteor of light o'er the waters ! her child
 Is yet smiling, and playing, and murmuring ; so smiled
 The false deep ere the storm. Like a sister and brother
 The child and the ocean still smile on each other,
 Whilst—

ODE TO HEAVEN.

CHORUS OF SPIRITS.

First Spirit.

PALACE-ROOF of cloudless nights !
 Paradise of golden lights !
 Deep, immeasurable, vast,
 Which art now, and which wert then

Of the Present and the Past,
 Of the eternal Where and When,
 Presence-chamber, temple, home,
 Ever-canopying dome,
 Of acts and ages yet to come !

Glorious shapes have life in thee, 10
 Earth, and all earth's company ;
 Living globes which ever throng
 Thy deep chasms and wildernesses ;
 And green worlds that glide along ;
 And swift stars with flashing tresses ;
 And icy moons most cold and bright,
 And mighty suns beyond the night,
 Atoms of intensest light.

Even thy name is as a god,
 Heaven ! for thou art the abode 20
 Of that Power which is the glass
 Wherein man his nature sees.
 Generations as they pass
 Worship thee with bended knees.
 Their unremaining gods and they
 Like a river roll away :
 Thou remainest such—alway !—

Second Spirit.

Thou art but the mind's first chamber,
 Round which its young fancies clamber,
 Like weak insects in a cave,
 Lighted up by stalactites ;
 But the portal of the grave,

Where a world of new delights
 Will make thy best glories seem
 But a dim and noonday gleam
 From the shadow of a dream !

Third Spirit.

Peace ! the abyss is wreathed with scorn
 At your presumption, atom-born !

What is Heaven ? and what are ye
 Who its brief expanse inherit ? 40
 What are suns and spheres which flee
 With the instinct of that Spirit
 Of which ye are but a part ?
 Drops which Nature's mighty heart
 Drives through thinnest veins ! Depart !

What is Heaven ? a globe of dew,
 Filling in the morning new

Some eyed flower whose young leaves waken
 On an unimagined world :
 Constellated suns unshaken, 50
 Orbita measureless, are furled
 In that frail and fading sphere,
 With ten millions gathered there,
 To tremble, gleam, and disappear.

AN EXHORTATION.

CHAMELEONS feed on light and air :
 Poets' food is love and fame :
 If in this wide world of care
 Poets could but find the same

With as little toil as they,
 Would they ever change their hue
 As the light chameleons do,
 Suiting it to every ray
 Twenty times a day ?

Poets are on this cold earth, 10
 As chameleons might be,
 Hidden from their early birth
 In a cave beneath the sea ;
 Where light is, chameleons change :
 Where love is not, poets do :
 Fame is love disguised : if few
 Find either, never think it strange
 That poets range.

Yet dare not stain with wealth or power
 A poet's free and heavenly mind : 20
 If bright chameleons should devour
 Any food but beams and wind,
 They would grow as earthly soon
 As their brother lizards are.
 Children of a sunnier star,
 Spirits from beyond the moon,
 Oh, refuse the boon !

ODE TO THE WEST WIND.¹

I.

O WILD West Wind, thou breath of Autumn's being,
Thou, from whose unseen presence the leaves dead
Are driven, like ghosts from an enchanter fleeing,

Yellow, and black, and pale, and hectic red,
Pestilence-stricken multitudes : O thou,
Who chariotest to their dark wintry bed

The wing'd seeds, where they lie cold and low,
Each like a corpse within its grave, until
Thine azure sister of the Spring shall blow

Her clarion o'er the dreaming earth, and fill
(Driving sweet buds like flocks to feed in air)
With living hues and odours plain and hill :

10

Wild Spirit, which art moving everywhere ;
Destroyer and preserver ; hear, oh, hear !

II.

Thou on whose stream, mid the steep sky's commotion,
Loose clouds like earth's decaying leaves are shed,
Shook from the tangled boughs of Heaven and Ocean,

¹ This poem was conceived and chiefly written in a wood that skirts the Arno, near Florence, and on a day when that tempestuous wind, whose temperature is at once mild and animating, was collecting the vapours which pour down the autumnal rains. They began, as I foresaw, at sunset with a violent tempest of hail and rain, attended by that magnificent thunder and lightning peculiar to the Cisalpine regions.

The phenomenon alluded to at the conclusion of the third stanza is well known to naturalists. The vegetation at the bottom of the sea, of rivers, and of lakes, sympathizes with that of the land in the change of seasons, and is consequently influenced by the winds which announce it.

Angels of rain and lightning : there are spread
 On the blue surface of thine aëry surge,
 Like the bright hair uplifted from the head 20
 Of some fierce Maenad, even from the dim verge
 Of the horizon to the zenith's height,
 The locks of the approaching storm. Thou dirge
 Of the dying year, to which this closing night
 Will be the dome of a vast sepulchre,
 Vaulted with all thy congregated might
 Of vapours, from whose solid atmosphere
 Black rain, and fire, and hail will burst : oh, hear !

III.

Thou who didst waken from his summer dreams
 The blue Mediterranean, where he lay,
 Lulled by the coil of his crystalline streams, 30
 Beside a pumice isle in Baiae's bay,
 And saw in sleep old palaces and towers
 Quivering within the wave's intenser day,
 All overgrown with azure moss and flowers
 So sweet, the sense faints picturing them ! Thou
 For whose path the Atlantic's level powers
 Cleave themselves into chasms, while far below
 The sea-blooms and the oozy woods which wear
 The sapless foliage of the ocean, know 40
 Thy voice, and suddenly grow gray with fear,
 And tremble and despoil themselves : oh, hear !

IV.

If I were a dead leaf thou mightest bear ;
 If I were a swift cloud to fly with thee ;
 A wave to pant beneath thy power, and share
 The impulse of thy strength, only less free
 Than thou, O uncontrollable ! If even
 I were as in my boyhood, and could be
 The comrade of thy wanderings over Heaven,
 As then, when to outstrip thy skiey speed 50
 Scarce seemed a vision ; I would ne'er have striven
 As thus with thee in prayer in my sore need.
 Oh, lift me as a wave, a leaf, a cloud !
 I fall upon the thorns of life ! I bleed !
 A heavy weight of hours has chained and bowed
 One too like thee : tameless, and swift, and proud.

V.

Make me thy lyre, even as the forest is :
 What if my leaves are falling like its own !
 The tumult of thy mighty harmonies
 Will take from both a deep, autumnal tone, 60
 Sweet though in sadness. Be thou, Spirit fierce,
 My spirit ! Be thou me, impetuous one !
 Drive my dead thoughts over the universe
 Like withered leaves to quicken a new birth !
 And, by the incantation of this verse,
 Scatter, as from an unextinguished hearth
 Ashes and sparks, my words among mankind !
 Be through my lips to unawakened earth
 The trumpet of a prophecy ! O, Wind,
 If Winter comes, can Spring be far behind ? 70

AN ODE

WRITTEN OCTOBER, 1819, BEFORE THE SPANIARDS HAD
RECOVERED THEIR LIBERTY.

ARISE, arise, arise !

There is blood on the earth that denies ye bread ;

Be your wounds like eyes

To weep for the dead, the dead, the dead.

What other grief were it just to pay ?

Your sons, your wives, your brethren, were they ;

Who said they were slain on the battle day ?

Awaken, awaken, awaken !

The slave and the tyrant are twin-born foes ;

Be the cold chains shaken

10

To the dust where your kindred repose, repose :

Their bones in the grave will start and move,

When they hear the voices of those they love,

Most loud in the holy combat above.

Wave, wave high the banner !

When Freedom is riding to conquest by :

Though the slaves that fan her

Be Famine and Toil, giving sigh for sigh.

And ye who attend her imperial car,

Lift not your hands in the banded war,

But in her defence whose children ye are.

20

Glory, glory, glory,

To those who have greatly suffered and done !

Never name in story

Was greater than that which ye shall have won.

Conquerors have conquered their foes alone,
Whose revenge, pride, and power they have overthrown:
Ride ye, more victorious, over your own.

Bind, bind every brow
With crownals of violet, ivy, and pine : 30
 Hide the blood-stains now
With hues which sweet Nature has made divine :
Green strength, azure hope, and eternity :
But let not the pansy among them be ;
Ye were injured, and that means memory.

THE CLOUD.

I BRING fresh showers for the thirsting flowers,
 From the seas and the streams ;
I bear light shade for the leaves when laid
 In their noonday dreams.
From my wings are shaken the dews that waken
 The sweet buds every one,
When rocked to rest on their mother's breast,
 As she dances about the sun.

I wield the flail of the lashing hail,
 And whiten the green plains under, 10
And then again I dissolve it in rain,
 And laugh as I pass in thunder.

I sift the snow on the mountains below,
 And their great pines groan aghast ;
And all the night 'tis my pillow white,
 While I sleep in the arms of the blast.

Sublime on the towers of my skiey bowers,
 Lightning my pilot sits ;
 In a cavern under is fettered the thunder,
 It struggles and howls at fits ; 20
 Over earth and ocean, with gentle motion,
 This pilot is guiding me,
 Lured by the love of the genii that move
 In the depths of the purple sea ;
 Over the rills, and the crags, and the hills,
 Over the lakes and the plains,
 Wherever he dream, under mountain or stream,
 The Spirit he loves remains ;
 And I all the while bask in Heaven's blue smile,
 Whilst he is dissolving in rains. 30

The sanguine Sunrise, with his meteor eyes,
 And his burning plumes outspread,
 Leaps on the back of my sailing rack,
 When the morning star shines dead ;
 As on the jag of a mountain crag,
 Which an earthquake rocks and swings,
 An eagle alit one moment may sit
 In the light of its golden wings.
 And when Sunset may breathe, from the lit sea beneath,
 Its ardours of rest and of love, 40
 And the crimson pall of eve may fall
 From the depth of Heaven above,
 With wings folded I rest, on mine aëry nest,
 As still as a brooding dove.

That orbèd maiden with white fire laden,
 Whom mortals call the Moon,

Glides glimmering o'er my fleece-like floor,
 By the midnight breezes strewn ;
 And wherever the beat of her unseen feet,
 Which only the angels hear, 50

May have broken the woof of my tent's thin roof,
 The stars peep behind her and peer ;
 And I laugh to see them whirl and flee,
 Like a swarm of golden bees,
 When I widen the rent in my wind-built tent,
 Till the calm rivers, lakes, and seas,
 Like strips of the sky fallen through me on high,
 Are each paved with the moon and these.

I bind the Sun's throne with a burning zone,
 And the Moon's with a girdle of pearl ; 60
 The volcanoes are dim, and the stars reel and swim,
 When the whirlwinds my banner unfurl.
 From cape to cape, with a bridge-like shape,
 Over a torrent sea,
 Sunbeam-proof, I hang like a roof,—
 The mountains its columns be.
 The triumphal arch through which I march
 With hurricane, fire, and snow,
 When the Powers of the air are chained to my chair,
 Is the million-coloured bow ; 70
 The sphere-fire above its soft colours wove,
 While the moist Earth was laughing below.

I am the daughter of Earth and Water,
 And the nursling of the Sky ;
 I pass through the pores of the ocean and shores ;
 I change, but I cannot die.

For after the rain when with never a stain
 The pavilion of Heaven is bare,
 And the winds and sunbeams with their convex gleams
 Build up the blue dome of air,
 I silently laugh at my own cenotaph, 80
 And out of the caverns of rain,
 Like a child from the womb, like a ghost from the tomb,
 I arise and unbuild it again.

TO A SKYLARK.

HAIL to thee, blithe Spirit !
 Bird thou never wert,
 That from Heaven, or near it,
 Pourest thy full heart
 In profuse strains of unpremeditated art.
 Higher still and higher
 From the earth thou springest
 Like a cloud of fire ;
 The blue deep thou wingest,
 And singing still dost soar, and soaring ever singest. 10

In the golden lightning
 Of the sunken sun,
 O'er which clouds are bright'ning,
 Thou dost float and run ;
 Like an unbodied joy whose race is just begun.

The pale purple even
 Melts around thy flight ;
 Like a star of Heaven,

In the broad daylight
Thou art unseen, but yet I hear thy shrill delight, 20

Keen as are the arrows
Of that silver sphere,
Whose intense lamp narrows
In the white dawn clear
Until we hardly see—we feel that it is there.

All the earth and air
With thy voice is loud,
As, when night is bare,
From one lonely cloud
The moon rains out her beams, and Heaven is over-
flowed. 30

What thou art we know not ;
What is most like thee ?
From rainbow clouds there flow not
Drops so bright to see
As from thy presence showers a rain of melody.

Like a Poet hidden
In the light of thought,
Singing hymns unbidden,
Till the world is wrought
To sympathy with hopes and fears it heeded not : 40

Like a high-born maiden
In a palace-tower,
Soothing her love-laden
Soul in secret hour
With music sweet as love, which overflows her bower :

Like a glow-worm golden
 In a dell of dew,
 Scattering unbehoden
 Its aëreal hue

Among the flowers and grass, which screen it from the
 view !

50

Like a rose embowered
 In its own green leaves,
 By warm winds deflowered,
 Till the scent it gives

Makes faint with too much sweet those heavy-wingèd
 thieves :

Sound of vernal showers
 On the twinkling grass,
 Rain-awakened flowers,
 All that ever was

59

Joyous, and clear, and fresh, thy music doth surpass :

Teach us, Sprite or Bird,
 What sweet thoughts are thine :
 I have never heard
 Praise of love or wine

That panted forth a flood of rapture so divine.

Chorus Hymeneal,
 Or triumphal chant,
 Matched with thine would be all
 But an empty vaunt,

A thing wherein we feel there is some hidden want.

70

What objects are the fountains
 Of thy happy strain ?

What fields, or waves, or mountains ?

What shapes of sky or plain ?

What love of thine own kind ? what ignorance of pain ?

With thy clear keen joyance

Languor cannot be :

Shadow of annoyance

Never came near thee :

Thou lovest—but ne'er knew love's sad satiety. 80

Waking or asleep,

Thou of death must deem

Things more true and deep

Than we mortals dream,

Or how could thy notes flow in such a crystal stream ?

We look before and after,

And pine for what is not :

Our sincerest laughter

With some pain is fraught ;

Our sweetest songs are those that tell of saddest
thought. 90

Yet if we could scorn

Hate, and pride, and fear ;

If we were things born

Not to shed a tear,

I know not how thy joy we ever should come near.

Better than all measures

Of delightful sound,

Better than all treasures

That in books are found,

Thy skill to poet were, thou scorner of the ground ! 100

Teach me half the gladness
 That thy brain must know,
 Such harmonious madness
 From my lips would flow
 The world should listen then—as I am listening now.

ODE TO LIBERTY.

Yet, Freedom, yet, thy banner, torn but flying,
 Streams like a thunder-storm against the wind.

BYRON.

I.

A GLORIOUS people vibrated again
 The lightning of the nations : Liberty
 From heart to heart, from tower to tower, o'er Spain,
 Scattering contagious fire into the sky,
 Gleamed. My soul spurned the chains of its dismay,
 And in the rapid plumes of song
 Clothed itself, sublime and strong,
 (As a young eagle soars the morning clouds among,)
 Hovering inverse o'er its accustomed prey ;
 Till from its station in the Heaven of same 10
 The Spirit's whirlwind rapt it, and the ray
 Of the remotest sphere of living flame
 Which paves the void was from behind it flung,
 As foam from a ship's swiftness, when there came
 A voice out of the deep : I will record the same.

II.

The Sun and the serenest Moon sprang forth :
 The burning stars of the abyss were hurled
 Into the depths of Heaven. The daedal earth,
 That island in the ocean of the world,

Hung in its cloud of all-sustaining air : 20
 But this divinest universe
 Was yet a chaos and a curse,
 For thou wert not : but, power from worst producing
 worse,
 The spirit of the beasts was kindled there,
 And of the birds, and of the watery forms,
 And there was war among them, and despair
 Within them, raging without truce or terms :
 The bosom of their violated nurse
 Groaned, for beasts warred on beasts, and worms on
 worms, 29
 And men on men ; each heart was as a hell of storms.

III.

Man, the imperial shape, then multiplied
 His generations under the pavilion
 Of the Sun's throne : palace and pyramid,
 Temple and prison, to many a swarming million
 Were, as to mountain-wolves their ragged caves.
 This human living multitude
 Was savage, cunning, blind, and rude,
 For thou wert not ; but o'er the populous solitude,
 Like one fierce cloud over a waste of waves,
 Hung Tyranny ; beneath, sate deified 40
 The sister-pest, congregator of slaves ;
 Into the shadow of her pinions wide
 Anarchs and priests, who feed on gold and blood
 Till with the stain their inmost souls are dyed,
 Drove the astonished herds of men from every side.

IV.

The nodding promontories, and blue isles,
 And cloud-like mountains, and dividuous waves
 Of Greece, basked glorious in the open smiles
 Of favouring Heaven : from their enchanted caves
 Prophetic echoes flung dim melody. 50

On the unapprehensive wild
 The vine, the corn, the olive mild,
 Grew savage yet, to human use unreconciled ;
 And, like unfolded flowers beneath the sea,
 Like the man's thought dark in the infant's brain,
 Like aught that is which wraps what is to be,
 Art's deathless dreams lay veiled by many a vein
 Of Parian stone ; and, yet a speechless child,
 Verse murmured, and Philosophy did strain 59
 Her lidless eyes for thee ; when o'er the Aegean main

V.

Athens arose : a city such as vision
 Builds from the purple crags and silver towers
 Of battlemented cloud, as in derision
 Of kingliest masonry : the ocean-floors
 Pave it ; the evening sky pavilions it ;
 Its portals are inhabited
 By thunder-zonèd winds, each head
 Within its cloudy wings with sun-fire garlanded,—
 A divine work ! Athens, diviner yet,
 Gleamed with its crest of columns, on the will 70
 Of man, as on a mount of diamond, set ;
 For thou wert, and thine all-creative skill

Peopled, with forms that mock the eternal dead
In marble immortality, that hill
Which was thine earliest throne and latest oracle.

VI.

Within the surface of Time's fleeting river
Its wrinkled image lies, as then it lay
Immovably unquiet, and for ever
It trembles, but it cannot pass away !
The voices of thy bards and sages thunder 80
With an earth-awakening blast
Through the caverns of the past :
(Religion veils her eyes ; Oppression shrinks aghast :)
A wingèd sound of joy, and love, and wonder,
Which soars where Expectation never flew,
Rending the veil of space and time asunder !
One ocean feeds the clouds, and streams, and dew ;
One Sun illumines Heaven ; one Spirit vast
With life and love makes chaos ever new,
As Athens doth the world with thy delight renew. 90

VII.

Then Rome was, and from thy deep bosom fairest,
Like a wolf-cub from a Cadmaean Maenad,
She drew the milk of greatness, though thy dearest
From that Elysian food was yet unweanèd ;
And many a deed of terrible uprightness
By thy sweet love was sanctified ;
And in thy smile, and by thy side,
Saintly Camillus lived, and firm Atilius died.

But when tears stained thy robe of vestal whiteness,
 And gold profaned thy Capitolian throne, 100
 Thou didst desert, with spirit-wingèd lightness,
 The senate of the tyrants : they sunk prone
 Slaves of one tyrant : Palatinus sighed
 Faint echoes of Ionian song ; that tone
 Thou didst delay to hear, lamenting to disown.

VIII.

From what Hyrcanian glen or frozen hill,
 Or piny promontory of the Arctic main,
 Or utmost islet inaccessible,
 Didst thou lament the ruin of thy reign,
 Teaching the woods and waves, and desert rocks, 110
 And every Naiad's ice-cold urn,
 To talk in echoes sad and stern
 Of that sublimest lore which man had dared unlearn ?
 For neither didst thou watch the wizard flocks
 Of the Scald's dreams, nor haunt the Druid's sleep.
 What if the tears rained through thy shattered locks
 Were quickly dried ? for thou didst groan, not weep,
 When from its sea of death, to kill and burn,
 The Galilean serpent forth did creep,
 And made thy world an undistinguishable heap. 120

IX.

A thousand years the Earth cried, ' Where art thou ? '
 And then the shadow of thy coming fell
 On Saxon Alfred's olive-cinctured brow :
 And many a warrior-peopled citadel,

Like rocks which fire lifts out of the flat deep,
 Arose in sacred Italy,
 Frowning o'er the tempestuous sea
 Of kings, and priests, and slaves, in tower-crowned
 majesty ;
 That multitudinous anarchy did sweep
 And burst around their walls, like idle foam, 130
 Whilst from the human spirit's deepest deep
 Strange melody with love and awe struck dumb
 Dissonant arms ; and Art, which cannot die,
 With divine wand traced on our earthly home
 Fit imagery to pave Heaven's everlasting dome.

X.

Thou huntress swifter than the Moon ! thou terror
 Of the world's wolves ! thou bearer of the quiver,
 Whose sunlike shafts pierce tempest-wingèd Error,
 As light may pierce the clouds when they disperse
 In the calm regions of the orient day ! 140
 Luther caught thy wakening glance ;
 Like lightning, from his leaden lance
 Reflected, it dissolved the visions of the trance
 In which, as in a tomb, the nations lay ;
 And England's prophets hailed thee as their queen,
 In songs whose music cannot pass away,
 Though it must flow forever : not unseen
 Before the spirit-sighted countenance
 Of Milton didst thou pass, from the sad scene
 Beyond whose night he saw, with a dejected mien. 150

XI.

The eager hours and unreluctant years
 As on a dawn-illumined mountain stood,
 Trampling to silence their loud hopes and fears,
 Darkening each other with their multitude,
 And cried aloud, ' Liberty ! ' Indignation
 Answered Pity from her cave ;
 Death grew pale within the grave,
 And Desolation howled to the destroyer, Save !
 When like Heaven's Sun girt by the exhalation
 Of its own glorious light, thou didst arise, 160
 Chasing thy foes from nation unto nation
 Like shadows : as if day had cloven the skies
 At dreaming midnight o'er the western wave,
 Men started, staggering with a glad surprise,
 Under the lightnings of thine unfamiliar eyes.

XII.

Thou Heaven of earth ! what spells could pall thee then
 In ominous eclipse ? a thousand years
 Bred from the slime of deep Oppression's den,
 Dyed all thy liquid light with blood and tears,
 Till thy sweet stars could weep the stain away ; 170
 How like Bacchanals of blood
 Round France, the ghastly vintage, stood
 Destruction's sceptred slaves, and Folly's mitred brood !
 When one, like them, but mightier far than they,
 The Anarch of thine own bewildered powers,
 Rose : armies mingled in obscure array,
 Like clouds with clouds, darkening the sacred bowers
 Of serene Heaven. He, by the past pursued.

Rests with those dead, but unforgotten hours,
 Whose ghosts scare victor kings in their ancestral
 towers. 180

XIII.

England yet sleeps : was she not called of old ?
 Spain calls her now, as with its thrilling thunder
 Vesuvius wakens Aetna, and the cold
 Snow-crags by its reply are cloven in sunder :
 O'er the lit waves every Aeolian isle
 From Pithecura to Pelorus
 Howls, and leaps, and glares in chorus :
 They cry, ' Be dim ; ye lamps of Heaven suspended o'er
 us ! '
 Her chains are threads of gold, she need but smile
 And they dissolve ; but Spain's were links of steel,
 Till bit to dust by virtue's keenest file. 191

Twins of a single destiny ! appeal
 To the eternal years enthroned before us
 In the dim West, impress us from a seal !
 All ye have thought and done Time cannot dare
 conceal.

XIV.

Tomb of Arminius ! render up thy dead
 Till, like a standard from a watch-tower's staff,
 His soul may stream over the tyrant's head ;
 Thy victory shall be his epitaph,
 Wild Bacchanal of truth's mysterious wine, 200
 King-deluded Germany,
 His dead spirit lives in thee.
 Why do we fear or hope ? thou art already free !

And thou, lost Paradise of this divine
 And glorious world ! thou flowery wilderness !
 Thou island of eternity ! thou shrine
 Where Desolation, clothed with loveliness,
 Worships the thing thou wert ! O Italy,
 Gather thy blood into thy heart ; repress
 The beasts who make their dens thy sacred palaces.

XV.

Oh, that the free would stamp the impious name 211
 Of KING into the dust ! or write it there,
 So that this blot upon the page of fame
 Were as a serpent's path, which the light air
 Erases, and the flat sands close behind !
 Ye the oracle have heard :
 Lift the victory-flashing sword,
 And cut the snaky knots of this foul gordian word,
 Which, weak itself as stubble, yet can bind
 Into a mass, irrefragably firm, 220
 The axes and the rods which awe mankind ;
 The sound has poison in it, 'tis the sperm
 Of what makes life foul, cancerous, and abhorred ;
 Disdain not thou, at thine appointed term,
 To set thine armèd heel on this reluctant worm.

XVI.

Oh, that the wise from their bright minds would kindle
 Such lamps within the dome of this dim world,
 That the pale name of PRIEST might shrink and dwindle
 Into the hell from which it first was hurled,
 A scoff of impious pride from fiends impure ; 230

XVII.

He who taught man to vanquish whatsoever
Can be between the cradle and the grave
Crowned him the King of Life. Oh, vain endeavour !
If on his own high will, a willing slave,
He has enthroned the oppression and the oppressor.
What if earth can clothe and feed
Amplest millions at their need,
And power in thought be as the tree within the seed ?
Or what if Art, an ardent intercessor,
Driving on fiery wings to Nature's throne, 250
Checks the great mother stooping to caress her,
And cries : ' Give me, thy child, dominion
Over all height and depth ' ? if Life can breed
New wants, and wealth from those who toil and groan
Rend of thy gifts and hers a thousandfold for one !

XVIII.

Come thou, but lead out of the inmost cave
Of man's deep spirit, as the morning-star
Beckons the Sun from the Eoan wave.

Wisdom. I hear the pennons of her car
 Self-moving, like cloud charioted by flame ; 260
 Comes she not, and come ye not,
 Rulers of eternal thought,
 To judge, with solemn truth, life's ill-apportioned lot ?
 Blind Love, and equal Justice, and the Fame
 Of what has been, the Hope of what will be ?
 O Liberty ! if such could be thy name
 Wert thou disjoined from these, or they from thee :
 If thine or theirs were treasures to be bought
 By blood or tears, have not the wise and free
 Wept tears, and blood like tears ?—The solemn har-
 mony 270

XIX.

Paused, and the Spirit of that mighty singing
 To its abyss was suddenly withdrawn ;
 Then, as a wild swan, when sublimely winging
 Its path athwart the thunder-smoke of dawn,
 Sinks headlong through the aëreal golden light
 On the heavy-sounding plain,
 When the bolt has pierced its brain ;
 As summer clouds dissolve, unburthened of their rain ;
 As a far taper fades with fading night,
 As a brief insect dies with dying day, 280
 My song, its pinions disarrayed of might,
 Drooped ; o'er it closed the echoes far away
 Of the great voice which did its flight sustain,
 As waves which lately paved his watery way
 Hiss round a drowner's head in their tempestuous play.

CANCELLED FRAGMENTS OF PROMETHEUS
UNBOUND.

[Printed by Mr. C. D. Locock, *Examination of the Shelley MSS.*
at the Bodleian Library, 1903, pp. 33-7.]

(following I. 37)

When thou descendst each night with open eyes
In torture, for a tyrant seldom sleeps,
Thou never ;

(following I. 195)

Which thou henceforth art doomed to interweave

(following the first two words of I. 342)

[Of Hell :] I placed it in his choice to be
The crown, or trampled refuse of the world
With but one law itself a glorious boon—
I gave—

(following I. 707)

SECOND SPIRIT.

I leaped on the wings of the Earth-star damp
As it rose on the steam of a slaughtered camp—
The sleeping newt heard not our tramp
As swift as the wings of fire may pass—
We threaded the points of long thick grass
Which hide the green pools of the morass
But shook a water-serpent's couch
In a cleft skull, of many such
The widest ; at the meteor's touch

The snake did seem to see in dream
 Thrones and dungeons overthrown
 Visions how unlike his own . . .
 'Twas the hope the prophecy
 Which begins and ends in thee

• • • • •
 (following II. i. 110)

Lift up thine eyes Panthea—they pierce they burn !

PANTHEA.

Alas ! I am consumed—I melt away
 The fire is in my heart—

ASIA.

Thine eyes burn burn !—
 Hide them within thine hair—

PANTHEA.

O quench thy lips
 I sink I perish

ASIA.

Shelter me now—they burn
 It is his spirit in their orbs . . . my life
 Is ebbing fast—I cannot speak—

PANTHEA.

Rest, rest !

Sleep death annihilation pain ! aught else

• • • • •
 (following II. iv. 27)

Or looks which tell that while the lips are calm
 And the eyes cold, the spirit weeps within
 Tears like the sanguine sweat of agony ;

• • • • •

UNCANCELLED PASSAGE.

(following II. v. 71).

ASIA.

You said that spirits spoke, but it was thee
 Sweet sister, for even now thy curvèd lips
 Tremble as if the sound were dying there
 Not dead

PANTHEA.

Alas it was Prometheus spoke
 Within me, and I know it must be so
 I mixed my own weak nature with his love
 And my thoughts
 Are like the many forests of a vale
 Through which the might of whirlwind and of rain
 Had passed—they rest rest through the evening light
 As mine do now in thy belovèd smile.

CANCELLED FRAGMENTS OF THE ODE TO
HEAVEN.

[Published by Mr. C. D. Locock, *Examination, &c.*, 1903.]

NOTE.—Kroder has pointed out that the last portion of this fragment must belong to the *Mask of Anarchy*.

THE [living frame which sustains my soul]
 Is [sinking beneath the fierce control]
 Down through the lampless deep of song
 I am drawn and driven along—
 When a Nation screams aloud
 Like an eagle from the cloud
 When a . . .

When the night . . .

• • • • •
Watch the look askance and old—
See neglect, and falsehood fold. . . .

CANCELLED STANZA OF AN ODE, WRITTEN
OCTOBER, 1819.

[Published in *The Times* (Rossetti).]

GATHER, O gather,
Foemen and friend in love and peace !
Waves sleep together
When the blasts that called them to battle, cease.
For fangless Power grown tame and mild
Is at play with Freedom's fearless child—
The dove and the serpent reconciled !

CANCELLED PASSAGE OF THE ODE TO
LIBERTY.

[Published by Dr. Garnett, *Relics of Shelley*, 1862.]

WITHIN a cavern of man's trackless spirit
Is throned an Image, so intensely fair
That the adventurous thoughts that wander near it
Worship, and as they kneel, tremble and wear
The splendour of its presence, and the light
Penetrates their dreamlike frame
Till they become charged with the strength of flame.

NOTES ON THE TEXT.

THE book of which this edition reproduces the text appeared in London in August 1820. The proof-sheets could not conveniently be sent out to Italy, and were corrected on the spot by Shelley's friends, with the result that the text is full of errors. In the *Prometheus* we have three authorities to consider:—(1) The printers' MS., which is not extant, was not written by Shelley, but copied by his wife, probably from dictation (letters to Ollier, Dec. 15, and to Gisborne, Dec. 23, 1819). The text of 1820 is liable, therefore, to the mistakes of the writer as well as those of the printer. (2) Mrs. Shelley, in her edition of the poems, in 1839, made corrections in the *Prometheus* 'from a list of errata written by Shelley himself'. But it is probable that she also corrected on her own responsibility. (3) Among the Shelley MSS. in the Bodleian Library there is a draft of the drama in the poet's own hand, which Mrs. Shelley did not use. It is held to be the last draft before the printers' MS., the draft on the basis of which that MS. was dictated. Moreover, Shelley entered into it corrections and hints for improvement after the printers' MS. had gone to the press (Herrig's *Archiv*, ciii. 312), and in this way gave it, in respect of some lines, the value of a second edition. The Bodleian draft contains many variations from our text, and some additions to it. It can claim a strong presumption, though not a certainty, against a weaker reading; but when *B* and 1839 agree against 1820 there is little room for doubt. The MS. in the Bodleian was collated with the printed text by Professor J. Zupitza, and his results were published after his death by Professor Schick, in Herrig's *Archiv für Neuere Sprachen*, Nos. CII, CIII. Another and more recent collation is that of Mr. C. D. Locock, in his *Examination of the Shelley Manuscripts in the Bodleian Library* (Oxford, 1903).

R=W. M. Rossetti's edition of the poems in 2 vols., 1870; *F*=that of H. B. Forman, in 4 vols., 1880; *D*=the 1 vol. edition by Edward Dowden, 1891; *W*=the edition by G. E. Woodberry, in 4 vols., 1892; *H*=the Oxford 1 vol. edition by Thomas Hutchinson, 1904; *A*=the edition of the *Prometheus*

by Richard Ackermann, Heidelberg, 1908 ; *L*—the *Examination* of the Bodleian MSS. by C. D. Locock, 1903, who makes recommendations for the text. *1839¹ 1839²*—Mrs. Shelley's two editions of the poems in that year ; *B* the Bodleian Manuscript ; *1820* the original text. Except in one or two instances I have adopted the corrections made by *H*. A complete apparatus of textual notes is furnished by Ackermann's edition, on which I have often depended, not all the editions being accessible to me at the moment of writing. My notes do not contain the minor variations in MS. *B*. The contents of this MS. were partially made known after Rossetti's edition by Miss M. Blind in the *Westminster Review*, 1870, and F. D. W. only knew them so far. The MS. became public when the Shelley family presented it to the Bodleian in 1893.

PROMETHEUS UNBOUND.

I. 15 empire. *1820.* 17 O, *1820.*

48 their wingless *B* (*L*).

54 thro' wide *B* : through the wide *1820, 1839.*

106 As Hell *1839, B* : a Hell *1820.* *In B follows stage-direction*, they pass with a terrible sound.

137 And love *1820* : *cj. Swinburne* and lovest : *cj. R* and Jove—how cursed I him ! *R explains text as it stands by making love a substantive. But it may be second person singular. Cf. 'Skylark', 80. F understands and (I) love.* 144 God *1820.*

157–8 beam from sunrise leap. *B* : *L remarks this could not have been overlooked if it had been intended for the text.*

185 words *1820.*

204 shaken *B* in pencil above peopled.

219 evil *1820* and most editions. *The text is W's.*

221 Cancelled stage-direction in *B* after this line. The sound beneath as of earthquake and the driving of whirlwinds—The Ravine is split and the Phantasm of Jupiter [appears] rises, surrounded by heavy clouds which dart forth lightning.

244 *cj. R* ghostly. 299 internally. *1820.*

301 Stage-direction *B* the Phantasm vanishes.

302 O, *1820.*

305 Stage-direction *B* he bends his head as in pain.

337 Stage-direction *B*. Enter Mercury followed by the Furies whom he represses with his wand.

345 gnash *1820* : wail *1820.* *The text as in B.*

349 Marginal note opposite this line *B*. The contrast would have been completer* if the sentiment had been transposed : but wherefore sacrifice the philosophical truth, that love however

monstrous in its expression is still less worthy of horror than hatred—[tho] perhaps in whatever*?

352 Awful Sufferer 1820.

388 tyrants' 1820 : tyrant's 1839, *F.* 491 agony. 1820.

520 Cancelled stage-direction *B* [enter rushing by groups of horrible forms ; they speak as they [rush by] pass in chorus].

539 After veil stage-direction *B*. The Furies having mingled in a strange dance divide, & in the background is seen a plain covered with burning cities.

552 Cancelled stage-direction *B* [a shadow passes over the scene and a piercing shriek is heard].

553 Mark 1820, 1839 : Hark *B, H, L, A.*

589 And 1820, 1839 : Tho' *B.*

596 Stage-direction *B* (*A*) darkness floats slowly across the scene.

619 ravin *B, 1839* : ruin 1820, *F.*

646 thou more ? *B* : thou ? 1820, 1839.

669. hark ? 1820. 687 there *B, 1839* : these 1820.

712 between with 1820 : cloud 1820.

732 shade, 1820, *F, H* : shade *W, A.*

733 born 1820. 745 i[n] *B, L, A.*

770 *B, F, A* no full stop after night.

774 silent 1820, 1839 : lulling *B, L, H* : killing *F*, misreading of *B.*

778 monster, 1820 and the editions. But this is against the sense ; they think the monster, Desolation, is Love, and call it so, but they awake to find that it is Pain (or Ruin, see line 780), Love's shadow.

800 Stage-direction *B* They vanish.

825 wan for white *B.* 826 vale 1820.

II. i. 89. weak altered to far *B, L.*

122 moon *B, F* : morn 1820, 1839.

126 o'er *B* : on 1820, 1839. 129 air 1820.

143 these *B* : the 1820, 1839.

151 morning 1820, 1839 : moving *B, L, A.*

153 by 1820. 155 fire, 1820.

II. ii. 15 climb and wander *B, A.* 25 noonday, 1820.

34 *L* reads stream for strain in *B* and would adopt it.

38 surrounding 1820 : surrounded *B, 1839.*

50 destined soft emotion, Attracts, 1820 : destined : soft emotion attracts 1839 : destined ; *W* : destined. *F, D.*

53 streams 1839¹.

60, 61 hurrying as 1820. The only thing that can be sucked up is the sound out of the earth. The spirits are driven in front of the storm (53, 54). It is a question, therefore, whether we should not read fleet, Behind as proposed by *R.* Text as in 1839.

93 dooms 1820 : doom *B, 1839.*

II. iii. 50 I see thin shapes 1820 : I see shapes 1839 : see'st thou shapes B : mist. 1820.

88 hidden, but from B.

II. iv. *Cancelled stage-direction B* and Demogorgon on his throne.

4 Sun, 1820. 5 Ungazed 1820.

12-16 R and Swinburne agree that a line is missing. *cj. R at for when.*

100 reigns 1820, F : rains 1839, R, B. 103 on 1820.

106 ay 1820. 115 secrets. 1820.

II. v. 9 this B : the 1820. 22 thine B : thy 1820.

48 *Stage-direction B* (Song of an enamoured Spirit).

54 lips 1820 : limbs 1839, B. *In Shelley's Italian Translation rendered by membre.*

67 brightness 1820.

76 the helm B, 1820, 1839 : a F, H. a helm should be cancelled in text in favour of the helm ; it is seemingly an oversight of F's adopted by subsequent editors except Ackermann.

96 winds on 1820, 1839, W : and on B, R, F.

98 pass'd 1820 : passed 1839.

III. i. 5 like unextinguished B, 1839 : like an unextinguished 1820.

13 might 1820, F : night B, 1839, R.

20 destined B, 1839 : distant 1820.

69 what then art B, 1839 : what art 1820.

III. ii. 22 many peopled 1820 : many-peopled B.

26 light laden 1820, 1839 : light-laden B.

39 i' the 1839, B : on the 1820.

48 *Stage-direction* the roar of waves B.

III. iii. 49 apparitions, 1820.

51 beauty, and no parentheses 1820. 53 reality, 1820.

55 wrapt 1820 : rapt B, 1839. 70 is omitted B, 1839.

83 *Stage-direction* kissing the ground after this line B.

85 thy 1820, 1839 : their B. 98 wind 1820.

102 unwithering B, 1839 : unwitting 1820.

164 with most B : most with 1820, 1839.

III. iv. 109 toil 1820. 110 fire. 1820.

114 feel ; 1820. 115 borne ; 1820.

121 flight 1839, B : light 1820. 124 said 1820.

133 fawn'd 1820 : fawned 1839 : frowned B.

172-174 *The punctuation in the text is R's. 1820 reads :*

conquerors : mouldering round

Those imaged to the pride of kings and priests,

A dark yet mighty faith,

This is retained by D and F. It is possible to explain this with F as meaning that the mouldering statues once imaged to the pride of priests and kings a dark faith and world-wide power. But then mouldering=politically or spiritually mouldering, to be understood of the ideas or forces which the statues represented, since at the present day the figures still look from their un worn obelisks. F defends this interpretation by referring to ll. 180 foll. and 189. But then we require priests (as in W) instead of priests.. These for those B, H.

180 man, 1820. 187 among 1820 : amid B.

188 hate, 1820. 192 or B : and 1820.

194-7 R reads man : in 194, man. in 197 ; i.e. still human, although in a state so blissful. 1820, he thinks, sets up an antithesis with the but between epithets which are not antithetic. F, keeping the text, understands the first but as=mere man, and the second but as expressing an antithesis=man emancipated but not man passionless.

198 Passionless ; 1820 : Passionless ? no B.

IV. i. 9 Stage-direction Panthea wakens B.

29 After this line stage-direction they vanish B.

66 dreams, 1820. 80 and the sunbeams B.

82 like radiant veils B.

107 loose 1820 : [loose] sliding B. L and A read sliding.

116 her B : his 1820. 138 or B : and 1820.

179 After this line stage-direction they depart B.

187 air, 1820. 208 night 1820, 1839 : light B.

209 dreams, 1820. 211 woods 1820.

212 airy 1820 : airy B. 215 thunder-storm, 1820.

225 strings B, 1839 : string 1820.

242 white and green B, R : white green 1820.

274 spokes B, 1839 : spoke 1820.

276 lightening B : lightnings 1820.

280 mines B : mine 1820.

282 poised B : poized 1839 : poured 1820.

285 sea, even as a child is fed, 1820 and most editions ; the text as in W.

294 ej. F emblems these. 298 lie 1820.

315 cloak B : cloke 1820. 342 bones 1820.

343 blending. 1820. 349 mire. 1820.

355 by the 1839, B : by thunder-ball 1820.

371 pass, 1820. 385 kind 1820.

387 life B, F : light 1820, 1839. move. 1820 : move, 1839.

432 unfrozen B, 1839, F : infrozen 1820, R.

485-94 missing in B.

547 throng cancelled for feed B. Feed, as L remarks, would give point to herds in the previous line.

569 dread B, 1839 : dead 1820.

575 falter *B* : faulter 1839, *F* : flatter 1820.

Orthographical variations of 1820 from the text :—I. 32 chrystals : 125 check'd ; 358 heaven seems hell ; 385 chrystral-winged ; 569 truth ; 576 'Till ; 709 immoveably. II. i. 82 absorb'd ; 131 quench'd ; 153 As. iii. 71 down ; 88 treasur'd. v. 25 Egean. III. ii. 19 unstain'd. IV. 239 chrystral ; 388 man ; 475 wierd.

SENSITIVE PLANT.

In 1888 a thin quarto volume, bound in parchment, containing some autograph copies of Shelley's poems (with others in the script of Mrs. Shelley) was given to Harvard College Library by Mr. Edward A. Silsbee, who had procured it some years before 'from a lady in Florence connected with the Shelleys' (? Miss Clairmont). Of the 1820 poems it contains the following in Shelley's hand, occasionally corrected in ink and lead pencil : *The Sensitive Plant*, *An Exhortation*, *Ode to Heaven*, *Ode to Liberty* (ending at l. 21 and erased), *To a Skylark*. In Mrs. Shelley's hand, *A Vision of the Sea*. See the Notes on the MSS., issued for the Library of Harvard University by G. E. Woodberry, 1889.

I. 6 Like the Spirit of Love felt 1820 : And the Spirit of Love felt 1839¹ : And the Spirit of Love fell 1839².

29-32 Omit *Harvard MS.*

49 and moss *Harvard MS.*

82 And the *Harvard MS.*

II. 15 morn *Harvard MS.* 1839 : moon 1820.

23 and the going *Harvard MS.*

59 Through all *Harvard MS.*

III. 1, 2 fair, . . . awakened, 1820 and the editions. But this = were fair like stars, and leads away from the sense. The flowers of the fair garden were bedimmed as stars are by moonlight, or as Baiae is by the smoke of Vesuvius.

19 lovely *Harvard MS.* 1839 : lively 1820.

23 of morning *Harvard MS.*

26 snow *Harvard MS.* 1839 : now 1820.

28 drooping, white and wan, *Harvard MS.*

32 Leaf after leaf 1820 : Leaf by leaf *Harvard MS.* : Leaf after leaf, day by day 1839.

96 and their sudden flight *Harvard MS.*

98 Under *Harvard MS.*

114 And if *Harvard MS.*

118 Or if *Harvard MS.*

A VISION OF THE SEA.

6 ruining *Harvard MS.* 1839 : raining 1820.
 8 sunk *Harvard MS.* 1839 : sank 1820.
 35 by *Harvard MS.* : from 1820, 1839.
 87 all the *Harvard MS.* : all that 1820, 1839.
 116 through *Harvard MS.* : from 1820, 1839.
 122 cloud *Harvard MS.* 1839 : clouds 1820.
 160 convulsively *Harvard MS.* : impetuously 1820, 1839.

ODE TO HEAVEN.

27 such—alway!—*MS. B.*

THE CLOUD.

6 buds 1839 : birds 1820.

TO A SKYLARK.

55 those *Harvard MS.* : these 1820, 1839.

ODE TO LIBERTY

113 lore 1839 : love 1820. 118 *cj. R* scattered.
 134 wand 1820 : want 1839.
 192-5 seal, All ye have thought and done! Time will not dare conceal. 1820, 1839. *Reading of text = appeal to the example of America to set its seal on you. Time will not withhold the fruits of your great history. The substance of the appeal is put into the oratio recta, impress being imperative plural. R would like to read before us!*

In the dim West impress, as from a seal,
 All ye have thought and done Time cannot dare conceal.
 i.e. impress on America all ye have thought and done (such as) Time cannot dare conceal. *F would read as from a seal, i.e. England and Spain appeal to America to impress them with all that has been thought and done by republicanism in America. The text of 1820 can only be construed by making All ye have thought and done vocative case.*

212 KING *Boscombe MS.* : **** 1820, 1839 : Christ *cj. Swinburne.*

249 Or 1839 : O, 1820.

250 diving for driving 1839.

INTRODUCTION TO *PROMETHEUS UNBOUND*

Date and Text

COMPOSED at Este, September–October 1818 (Act I); at Rome, March–6 April 1819 (Acts II, III); at Florence, close of 1819 (Act IV). Published by C. and J. Ollier, London, summer 1820. Sources of the text are (i) edition of 1820; (ii) text in *Poetical Works*, edited by Mary Shelley, first and second editions, 1839, which were prepared with the aid of a list of *errata* written out by Shelley; (iii) a fair draft in Shelley's autograph, now in the Bodleian. This has been carefully collated by Mr. C. D. Locock, who prints the result in his *Examination of the Shelley MSS. in the Bodleian Library*, Oxford (Clarendon Press), 1903. With one or two exceptions, duly noted, the text of this volume is that given by Thomas Hutchinson in *The Complete Poetical Works of Percy Bysshe Shelley*, first printed in 1905 and frequently reprinted.

The Source in Aeschylus

In his mythological drama Shelley refashions the *Prometheus Bound* (*Προμηθεὺς Δεσμώτης*) of Aeschylus, the first play in a trilogy produced in Athens probably in or soon after the year 475 B.C. The second play was *The Unbinding of Prometheus* (*Προμηθεὺς Λυόμενος*), and the third *Prometheus The Fire-Bearer* (*Προμηθεὺς Πυρφόρος*). The argument of *The Fire-Bearer* can only be conjectured, but we learn something from several fragments

and from references in classical literature about that of *The Unbinding*. In the extant play the story is as follows:

Prometheus was one of the Titans or Elder gods over whom Cronos held sway, and who were ousted from the government of the world by the younger dynasty under the sovereignty of Zeus, the son of Cronos. But the victory was won by the help of Prometheus. For he, surpassing others, as his name implies, by forethought (but his brother, Epimetheus, by afterthought) warned the Titans that the war would be decided not, as they trusted, by rude force, but by guile or wit. And when they would not listen, he followed the guidance of his mother, Themis, and went over to the side of Zeus and instructed him in the way to prevail. Zeus, however, waxing tyrannous in his new dominion, and wielding his irresistible bolts, cowed and tamed all the gods or demi-gods, new or old, and, 'measuring right by might', thought he might do what he would. Being 'utterly pitiless,' he would fain have destroyed the feeble race of Man, that lived like ants in holes of the earth, with no wits to use their senses and no arts to ease their lives, doing what they did at random like figures in a dream. But Prometheus withheld him, and in pity and kindness amended the human lot. He made men intelligent and wise, and stole fire from heaven and gave it to them. He taught them the courses of the stars and to number and to write. From him they had the plough, the chariot, and the ship, medicine, prophecy, and the sacrificial rites or, briefly, all the arts by which they are bestead. For this Zeus had him nailed to a Caucasian rock, there to hang in age-long pain.

In the first scene of the play he is nailed there at the Tyrant's bidding by Hephaestus, attended by Strength and Force, ministers of Zeus, and the ruthless Force eggs on the unwilling god to his task. When all three have departed, a troop of Daughters of Oceanus fly in winged chariots to the Titan's side, full of pity and ruth, to whom he relates the events that have brought him low. In the middle of their colloquy Oceanus enters. Like most of the younger and all the elder gods, he pities the Titan, but advises the rebel to make his peace with a resistless enemy. He is haughtily rebuffed, and leaves the unbending sufferer to his fate. His daughters also upbraid the Titan for overweening, but will not leave him for their pity is more than their blame, and they remember how their sister, Hesione, who is somewhere afar, became Prometheus' bride (*P.V.* 555-61).

At this point enters Io, daughter of Inachus, king of Argos, of whom Zeus was once enamoured, so that Hera's jealousy pursued her with strange terrors to the ends of the earth. She is not wearing the form of a cow in which the god once disguised her, but is horned like one, and crazed by the stings of the gadfly and by the phantom of the herdsman Argus, the hundred-eyed, her one-time warder. She recounts her wanderings and learns from Prometheus what is yet to befall her. She is another victim of the wanton will of Zeus, and is to be the ancestress of Heracles who, as the foreseeing Prometheus tells her, will one day unbind him. For in due time, as he foretells, Zeus will resolve upon a marriage wherein he will beget a son stronger than himself, who will overthrow him. But

that his bride is to be the cause of his downfall he may not know until it has come about. Io has left the scene when the messenger Hermes arrives, and with threat and gibe demands the secret. Otherwise the earth will be rent and the Titan hurled into Tartarus, whence after a long time he will be brought back and hang again upon the rock, while an eagle shall daily lacerate his ever-renewed liver. And the torture will proceed until some god shall consent to go down to Tartarus in his stead. The demand is haughtily rejected ; in tempest and earthquake the earth yawns asunder, and Prometheus is cast to the nether world. But the gentle Oceanides will not leave him while he is in their sight and abide the storm.

We know from fragments and other indications that in the second play of the trilogy Prometheus was reconciled with Zeus. After an age in Tartarus he is brought back and hung again on the rock while an eagle tears his entrails as foretold. A chorus of Titans come to condole with him, to whom he recounts what he has done for men. Finally, having been set free at the command of Zeus by Heracles, who shoots the eagle with an arrow, he discloses the secret. The secret is that, if Zeus were to marry the sea-goddess Thetis, as he intended, their son would be stronger than his father. Zeus, therefore, abstained from the marriage and bestowed Thetis on Peleus, the father of Achilles, and saved his throne. To fulfil the condition on which Zeus promised to relent, the Centaur Chiron, who is incurably wounded, consents to ransom Prometheus and dwell in Tartarus in his stead.

So ended the second play according to the evidence ;

but that is generally regarded as misleading. By all that we know of Aeschylus, he would not continue the tyrant in his tyranny nor let the Titan 'unsay his high language' and give in. Nor would the protector of mankind purchase his freedom by leaving them defenceless. The evidence has been otherwise interpreted. Prometheus, in this interpretation, comes to terms, not when Zeus wantoned in his new power, but after he was moulded by ages of conflict and danger, into the august divinity, the friend and guide of man, the avenger of wrong and upholder of right, whom Aeschylus in his other extant dramas so profoundly reveres. Against him, so changed and chastened, the secret as to the marriage has no force, for he cannot be in danger of falling. It is not extorted but willingly disclosed, and Zeus of his free will does that which Prometheus had declared he would one day do under the pressure of calamity: 'I know he is harsh and a law unto himself. And yet I ween he will one day be gentle-minded, when in this wise (i.e. by the marriage) he hath been wrecked, and allaying his stubborn anger, will meet me in league and amity with a will on his side and a will on mine'¹ (P.V. 188-94).

RETENTION AND RECONSTRUCTION

But of such an explanation Shelley had not heard or thought. He took the story at its first impression and was 'averse to so feeble a conclusion as that of reconciling the Champion with the Oppressor of mankind'. They were not

¹ On the education of Zeus and his relenting see Dr. Gilbert Murray's *Aeschylus*, pp. 101 f., 200, 206, 210.

to be reconciled. He was well aware that good gains upon evil and becomes stronger in conflict with it. Indeed, the necessity and the reward of strife are implied and signified all through the *Prometheus Unbound*. But the poet and the visionary, while he welcomes the process, looks beyond it to the glorious issue and 'a new world that rights the disaster of this'. In this perspective he saw the evil and the good in sheer opposition and contending not to conquer but to kill. Jupiter must be quelled. Accordingly, in Shelley, he marries *Thetis*, and the son who is born to them expels his father. And since the play centres on the expulsion and concludes in the joy of man and nature he has no room for a Chiron or an Io. But he has to invent the conqueror and successor of the Tyrant, his son, and so puts in the vague and vasty figure of the irresistible Demogorgon. Other and higher powers than Aeschylus thought of are engaged in the conflict, though unseen. Jupiter and the mighty Demogorgon are the servants each of a superior divinity, and these two divinities perpetually at war. Above them is one Supreme, who permits the conflict to accomplish his perfect will. His name is Love (see note on Act II, sc. iv. 7 f.) and his special emissary is Asia, a far more important person than in any Aeschylean fable Hesione could have been. She and her attendant sisters, Panthea and Ione, are a remnant of the Oceanides, uplifted in the scale of being. But though the action moves in these altitudes, peopled by abstractions, bodiless or hardly embodied, with the addition of spirits and furies, and though real humanity appears but in glimpses, the passion in which the poet

himself intensely and bravely lived beats in the whole play. When all is done and won, his Prometheus and Asia supply themselves with children in a secluded paradise and their Elysian gladness swells the happiness of the earth and heavens. But from first to last the theme of 'Man's afflicted will' is the counterpoint of the 'beautiful idealism', and Shelley never wrote finer verse than the concluding stanzas on the loss of moral freedom and the hard way to win it again.

Indeed, in Shelley the children of men are more active than in Aeschylus and bear a part in their own deliverance. In Aeschylus the first dwellers on earth are witless and wretched, and Zeus abhors them and would fain root them out. In Shelley they were as happy in some ways under Cronos or Saturn as the denizens of the Age of Gold in Hesiod's *Works and Days* (109 f.): 'Like gods they lived, having a soul unknowing sorrow and apart from toil. Neither were they subject to miserable eld . . . and they died as overcome of sleep. The bounteous earth bare fruit for them of her own will, in plenty and without stint. And they in peace and quiet lived on their lands with many good things, rich in flocks and dear to the blessed gods' (tr. Mair). Only, whereas in Hesiod these generations were better than their posterity intellectually as well as morally, Shelley, taking his cue from the Zoroastrian myth that he had from Peacock (see note on II. iv. 7 f.), endows them with an unthinking tranquillity 'like the calm joy of flowers'. Soon, however, they yearned for knowledge and thought and all other gifts of the spirit that Saturn withheld from them. It was then

that Prometheus, their good genius, set up Jupiter to displace the unprofitable god and gave him wisdom to further and foster the human mind. But the successor became a tyrant so hard upon men that the Titan came to the rescue once more. He gave them the intellectual and spiritual outfit for the good life and while he, though pinned to the rock, resisted his enemy, they burned 'with fierce reproach' and 'hurled up insurrection' towards Heaven (Act III, i. 6). But *Prometheus Unbound* is a more daring prophecy than any classical writer conceived of till Virgil wrote his Fourth Eclogue. We can read in the Aeschylean fragments of the martyr and the oppressor eventually reconciled and the fair estate of man secured. We read in Shelley not only of the oppressor overthrown, but of man, by his own endeavour and more by metaphysical aid, purged entirely of the evil in his nature in which the oppression had taken root. But at the same time the poem is a prophecy of a faultless world, the desert blossoming like the rose, the lion lying down with the kid. And the chief actors are modelled accordingly. It remains, therefore, to make out what each of them is intended to stand for.

THE PROTAGONISTS

(a) Jupiter is, as he was in Aeschylus, a ruler stricken with 'the fell disease of power', who enslaves his subjects in body and mind. In the beginning Prometheus, their good genius, set him over them, for they need a governor and a guide in spiritual and in temporal things. So enthroned,

and acting through the rulers of Church and State, he was bound to one condition, that he should keep authority at one with freedom:

I gave him all he has,
And with this law alone, let men be free,
Clothed him with the dominion of wide heaven.

But by the tendency of all authority to become corrupt Jupiter broke his promise: for by his influence those who bear rule under him make men their slaves by political coercion or by superstitious fears. They try indeed to secure their power by vain alliances with social forces that make for liberty in the end (the union of Jupiter and Thetis), and this will be their and his undoing. But Shelley's meaning spreads outward like the ring in water when you cast a stone. Jupiter, by his defection, has become the servant or lieutenant of the mysterious Power of Evil that strives for ever with the Power of Good for dominion over space and time. He is the culmination of all evil things in the temporal world, and they and he stand or fall together. He is the head and front not only of all sinning against love or light, but of all hurting and destroying in the wide world.

(b) Prometheus has been fashioned by time and suffering into the coming man, or in Shelley's own words, 'the type of the highest perfection of moral and intellectual nature impelled by the purest and truest motives to the best and noblest ends'. But as the best that men can come to is the thing they set out for and the light they steer by, as the desire of perfection is ever in their hearts,

he is and has always been with them, 'their saviour and their strength'. He is the true son of preserving and fostering Earth (Gaia).¹ All the moral graces come by anticipation from him, and hope and love were advances, as it were, from his exchequer. There was an Indian temple, once built in great beauty to his honour, but deserted when the reign of Jove began, to which young men bore lamps as emblems of his quenchless hope (III. iii. 160-74). At his instigation men have attained to arts, inventions, laws, the creation of beauty, the pursuit of truth. That he set Jupiter to be their lord was the best he could have done for them had his providence in this respect not failed him. As is proper to a myth, however, he has touches of personality and frailty. In Aeschylus he is proud, self-willed, over-free of his tongue, mad with hate of his foes, one whom time must chasten. In Shelley he is all this in the beginning till the *anima naturaliter Christiana* that he has from his creator works upon him, and he revokes the curse he pronounced upon his enemy when the evil in the world fell even upon him. Under that infliction he was parted from Asia, his bride, who cannot be one with him while Jove reigns and his own infirmity is unredeemed. But, though parted, they communicate across the distance, so that his hope and courage are unbroken. In his penitence, in his anguish at the sight of the crucifix, and when he has withstood not physical torment only but the Furies that wring the mind,

¹ In Aeschylus he is said to be now the son of Gaia (the Earth) and now of Themis (Righteousness and Lawfulness). In Greek mythology Themis was the daughter of Gaia.

in his longing for a refuge in love or death, the portrayer has portrayed himself. But impersonations in Shelley change their aspects. Prometheus, as the strength of human kind, is a power in Nature knit together with her other powers. The Titan in Aeschylus invokes 'the holy ether and the swift winds, the rivers and seas, Mother Earth and the allseeing Sun', for these suffer the oppression that has come upon him and behold his plight with pity and sorrow. This invocation may have implied no philosophy of the poet's own. But when Wordsworth declared that earth, air, and sky work for the brave patriot and not a breathing of the wind forgets him, he used the language of a faith. And that faith in a Soul or Will that makes for good and aspires to its utmost measure in every mode of being was natural to Shelley and runs through his poetry. He would know at once what Aristotle meant by saying that 'all things in some sense desire the divine'. The victory of his Prometheus is an issue of the world's desire.

(c) Asia is taken from a class of beings (*δαιμόνες*) who in the Greek cosmology were watchers and protectors of human kind. Shelley's Witch of Atlas is another of the sort. They were mediators and interpreters between the gods and men, divine and immortal, but living on the earth or in the air. Some were attached to individuals, like the daemon of Socrates or the angels of the Jewish scriptures; some had a roving commission and operated anywhere. They carried the prayers of men to the gods, and the answers and injunctions of the gods to men, gave counsel, healed in disease, saved in danger. Much was

written about them in classical literature,¹ but we may assume that Shelley learnt most of what he knew of them from Plato. In the *Politicus* (272E) their functions are assigned to them by the Supreme Power, and they are his 'fellow rulers' (*συνάρχοντες*). In the *Laws* (713) God in His loving kindness sets them over mankind, 'and they with great ease and pleasure to themselves, and no less to us, take care of us and give us peace and reverence and order and justice never failing'. In the *Symposium* (202-3) Diotima tells Socrates that Love is a daemon and describes the daemonic powers, adding that he is 'a seeker after wisdom'. For in desiring the beautiful, he desires 'the eternal possession of good' of which wisdom is an element. Asia, then, is the special daemon of the supreme Love, and in a high-handed way is identified with the sea-born Aphrodite (II. v. 21-29), the spiritual or Euranian Aphrodite who appears again in *Adonais*. In one aspect she is the lover and guardian of Prometheus. Through all the evil days of their separation she is still in contact with him in a 'wordless converse' carried between them by Panthea, in whose eyes they read the adumbrations of their thought and feeling. After their reunion they will sail together along the river of Life to its bourne in Eternity, safe from its dangers, while love will be a music about them and the air they breathe (II. v. 72 f.). In the language of the essay *On Love* she is his 'antitype', the mind in finest sympathy with his own, by whose responses his best moments are sustained:

¹ For a conspectus of this literature see J. A. Stewart in *The Myths of Plato*, 434 f.

and thou art far,
 Asia, who, when my being overflowed
 Wert as a golden chalice to bright wine
 Which else had sunk into the thirsty dust.

At the summit of the action she is translated to a higher mode of being, and is hardly distinguishable from the divinity whence she proceeds. So glorified, she is the Life of Life and the Lamp of Earth; her footsteps 'pave the world with loveliness', beauty is her shadow, and her unveiled presence is brighter than sense can bear (II. v. 16 f. and 50 f., on which see Note). Since, then, love is the aspiration in all things to their perfect good, it is she who must fire the train to the universal redemption (II. iii. 90-98). Drawn by irresistible spells, she descends to the cave of Demogorgon. There, after their long vigil, the cardinal virtues, the one of the heart and the other of the mind, meet together. She wears again the aspect of the earth-bound daemon who, as Plato says of her, is 'a seeker after wisdom'. He, the chief of the daemons, whose office it is to know the truth and wield the law on which all things stand, must certify her of what she knows in her heart already, that Love, her master, is supreme over all that is good and all that is evil (II. iv. 114-24). And by her longing for the great event he must be incited to go into battle.

Asia, Panthea, and Ione are taken by some interpreters for the Christian excellences Love, Faith, and Hope respectively. (The names were evidently chosen for their pleasant sound.) And to be sure, Ione acted like Hope when at the outset of the tyranny she hid the shell whose notes were

to tell mankind of their deliverance. But between the attendant sisters the ascription, if intended, is not maintained. They are, however, distinguished by personal traits. Panthea is the chosen intimate of Asia, her messenger to her lover, her companion on the adventure to Demogorgon's cave. Shelley once discoursed to Hogg of two sisters tending a sheltered garden at their country home, of 'their amiable and innocent attachment, a little daughterly on the one side, a little motherly on the other'. There is a faint presentation of these relations between 'young Ione' and the stronger-minded Panthea. Throughout the play, as has been pointed out, Ione asks questions and Panthea answers them.

(d) Demogorgon comes of a long ancestry. He is taken from eastern sources into the Latin poetry of the Silver Age, and is alluded to in Lucan (*Pharsalia*, vi. 744-6) and in Statius (*Thebais*, iv. 513). Boccaccio, in his *Genealogia Deorum*, writes of him at length and he figures in the Italian poetry of the Renaissance, in Spenser (*Faerie Queene*, i. i. 37, i. v. 22, iv. ii. 47), and in *Paradise Lost* (ii. 965), where the 'dreaded name' of Demogorgon is present at the court of chaos in the nethermost abyss. In all probability Shelley learned about him from Peacock, who introduces him into his poem *Rhododaphne* (Canto vi) and appends a long and learned note. *Rhododaphne* was published in 1818, but written in 1817, when the author and Shelley were in frequent intercourse at Marlow. Peacock writes, on the authority of Boccaccio: 'He was the genius of the Earth, and the Sovereign Power of the terrestrial Daemons. He dwelt originally with Eternity and

Chaos until, becoming weary of inaction, he organized the chaotic elements, and surrounded the earth with the heavens. . . . This awful power was so sacred among the Arcadians that it was held impious to pronounce his name'. He adds that among his children were Pan and the Fates. Shelley has proceeded on these data. At their encounter Jupiter asks his conqueror who he is, and he replies, 'Eternity, demand no direr name.' Eternity is the thing that endures for ever, or is victor in the end. It is the law that rules the world or the mind or reason that imposes it, or the will that carries it out. Demogorgon, then, is a Spirit, a daemon assigned to the natural world, the supreme daemon, whose operations are as sure as Fate. Like Fate, he is inscrutable, 'a mighty darkness', formless until he assumes a form, and dwells in the heart of the earth. The thing that is to be is a 'doom', coiling like a snake under his throne until he looses it (II. iii. 97-98). As the conductor of the whole world he rules and guides the soul of man. All spirits are moved to resort to him for his wisdom (II. ii. 41 f.), and from the portal of his cave is hurled up an oracular vapour which to those who inhale it is truth, virtue, love, genius, or joy (II. iii. 4). It is he, therefore, who summons the auxiliary daemons from all the spheres to declare the means by which the new dispensation is to be sustained and, if ever evil shall break loose again, is to be recovered.

Act III, scene i presents the catastrophe. Jupiter is enthroned beside Thetis and is in a state of infatuate exultation, for the child of their union is born. He is born, but invisible to them, floating between them, as Jupiter

supposes, in transparent air and waiting to be incarnated. Even now, as he declares, the fatal Hour—the hour of his triumph—is bearing the captive Demogorgon in his chariot up to heaven, and the new-born Spirit will dispossess the great potentate of his bodily form and mighty power, and taking them upon himself will become 'the terror of the earth'. Then the Hour is to 'redescend' and extinguish in the hearts of men all that may remain of Demogorgon's influence like the lingering spark of a fire. The chariot arrives, and Demogorgon descends from it, not a captive, but a conqueror. The transpicuous Spirit is not incarnated, for he exists only in the Tyrant's fancy. The child of the union is Demogorgon himself, and Jupiter is overthrown by his own progeny whom he does not recognize when he sees him. To understand all this we must know who or what Thetis is. We are told only that she is 'a bright image of eternity': that is, the things that endure and prevail as they present themselves to Jupiter in an attractive and auspicious light. In marrying her he is like the earthly despots who try to perpetuate their power by founding universities and fostering the sciences and the arts, keeping them at the same time subservient and instrumental to themselves. They have no real communion with Beauty or Truth, but think they have them on their side in the debasement that the arts and sciences are bound to incur until they are free. Nevertheless, even in their subjection they will surely call out the will to freedom that sooner or later prevails. Though for a time she bent to his will, there was that in Thetis that could he have seen it would have warned her master away from

her. In the prophecy of *Prometheus Unbound* the inevitable mistake, in whatever way it is made, brings on the inevitable fall. And Demogorgon is the son of Jupiter in the sense that he succeeds to his empire, and the succession is brought about by the Tyrant himself and his marriage with the alluring Thetis.

THE ACTION

Act I. The Martyrdom of Prometheus

Prometheus has hung 3,000 years on the rock. At his side stand the Earth his mother, and the two sisters of Asia. Prometheus would fain hear the curse he once pronounced upon Jupiter, and since no mortal tongue may utter it, calls upon the phantom of the Tyrant himself to repeat it. He repents of his curse, and so is cleansed of his last infirmity. Meanwhile, the icy and sterile Caucasus, which lay at first in the wan light of the hours between night and day, has been struck by the dawn; and Hermes, the messenger of the gods, speeds down the slanting sunlight with Furies at his heels. Hermes is composed of factors from the Hephaestus, the Oceanus, and the Hermes of Aeschylus; he laments his task of outrage and counsels the Titan to reveal the Secret. His counsel having been rejected, he calls up the Furies, who come in darkness and storm. Here, as always, spiritualizing the old myths, Shelley makes these avengers wound the mind with visions of human misery and crime. When the torturers have departed, and the storm leaves the sky to 'Spring's delightful weather', a troop of those Spirits which watch

over the high endeavours of men gather around the tired victor. He is cheered by the news they bring, but feels that all hope is vain without love, and Asia is far from him.

Act II. The Intercession of Asia

At break of a spring morning, in a vale of the Indian Caucasus, Asia is joined by Panthea, who comes from Prometheus' side (scene i). The tardy dawn, the battle of light and mist, and the sudden splendour far flung over peaks and vales are symbols of what is to come. Panthea has dreamed that she saw the wound-worn Titan transfigured with the radiance of love, and that on all the forms of Nature she read the words, 'Follow, Follow'. The words are repeated by Echoes, which bid Asia follow, for 'an unspoken voice which sleeps in the world unknown' can be waked only by her. The sisters pass through a dense forest, the description of which (scene ii) relieves the action by a pastoral interlude, and come (scene iii) to a mountain pinnacle, where is the portal of Demogorgon's cave. Spirits lead them down to the depths, until (scene iv) they behold Demogorgon on his throne. The action is now held up for nearly 200 lines by a metaphysical discourse and a narrative of the Titan's dealing with mankind. The interruption, however, is not irrelevant. So far Prometheus has suffered and Asia is moved to intervene, and subsequently Jupiter is overthrown and Man and Nature beatified. But what is behind it all, the government of the world, has yet to be declared. This is done in the dialogue of Asia and Demogorgon. Asia submits her perplexities to the great sage,

and his answer comes into the play like a creed in a religious rite. From lines 32 to 109 the account in Aeschylus of the Promethean benefaction is matched by Shelley's version. It reads like a digression, but is woven into the dialogue as the main instance of the mystery by which Asia is troubled. How came it that the largesse of so much good was rewarded with so much evil? As she is asking when the deliverance shall come, the Hour arrives with its chariot, and Demogorgon ascends to heaven. A second incarnation of the Hour takes the sisters in his car (scene v) to a cloud poised above the earth. The Sun has not risen, but the cloud is full of light; it is the light of Asia, from whom all that dims her presence is now taken away.

Act III. The Fall of Jupiter and the Liberation of Prometheus

The first scene presents the dethronement of Jupiter, and for an explanation of its contents the reader is referred to what has been said of Demogorgon. In the next scene (ii) Apollo describes the fall to Oceanus (the Gods of the Tyranny in Shelley, as in Aeschylus, being adverse to it at heart), and they prophesy the glorious issue. In scene iii Asia and her sisters and the Earth stand round the rock of Caucasus while Hercules unbinds the Titan. The Martyr Spirits are to live henceforth in a delightful cave in which they will catch sight and sound of all beauty. The Spirit of the Hour is to take a shell and sound its music over the world, whereupon all things shall put off their evil nature. The Spirit of the Earth guides the com-

pany to the destined cave. In scene iv the Spirits of the Earth and of the Hour describe the renovation of all things which has already been foretold in a prophecy, and is now reported as an accomplished fact.

Act IV. The Consummation

The whole of Act III had been written in blank verse, but the drama stood in need of a lyrical ending. Moreover, the participation of the natural world in the spiritual conflict was an integral part of the theme and called for a larger space. The scene of Act IV is before the cave of Prometheus with a forest in sight. Panthea and Ione are discovered sleeping, but awaken to the sound of singing to describe and expound what they see or hear, as they had previously done. The first division of the Act (1-184) is a choral prelude. The hours of the bad régime (Time) bear the corpse of their father to his tomb in the era of perfection (Eternity), weeping (1-39). A Voice of Unseen Spirits sings of the 'storm of delight' that sweeps through the frame of Nature (40-80) and is succeeded at l. 81 by Spirits of the Human Mind, and at l. 89 by a chorus of Hours. After the Spirits of the Human Mind have sung their appropriate song they unite in one chorus with the Hours (l. 129) and six lines later the two choruses divide and sing alternately. Together they resolve to 'soar into the void field' beyond Creation, and build there a new and perfect world. This is accomplished at l. 169 by a semi-chorus of Hours, the new planet gathering shape as they wheel around it. A second semi-chorus of Hours encircle the old Earth and work a happy change in its creatures.

Finally, for four lines (175–8) the Spirits and the Hours reunite, only to part again, some remaining by the new planet, and others by the now rejuvenated earth.

The second division (185–318) presents visionary representations of the Moon and the Earth as seen by Ione and Panthea. Through each of two openings in the forest flows a melodious stream, and along each of these a shape is borne on volumes of music spreading in the air and running underground. The shape in one of the openings is a chariot whose body is moonlight and whose wheels are cloud, canopied by a transparent veil of darkness. It is driven by a wingèd infant, who stands for the Spirit of the Moon and guides the chariot with a moonbeam. Through the other forest avenue comes a massive sphere enclosing with it a thousand other spheres, which whirl round in music, while the spaces between them are peopled with strange and dreamlike figures. As it passes over the brook the beholders see it 'grinding the water into a bright and subtle mist', and the odour and light of the flowery and leafy forest are kneaded into one essence. Within the orb is seen the Spirit of the Earth sleeping and dreaming. Spokes of light from a star upon its forehead wheel round and light up the depths and the remains there hidden of ancient times (236–318). Both the Spirits are childlike, as the Spirit of the Earth is in the third act. The light from the child's forehead represents the explorative imagination. The grinding and the kneading stand for the natural facts of the resolution of one thing into many and the collection of many into one.

The third division (319–510) covers the mutual felicity

and the antiphonal paean of the Moon and the Earth, and the language is suited not to the young Spirits but to the impersonated planets. Much the larger share is borne by the Earth. As the Mother of mankind, she is now the centre of the universal renovation. She has outlived and buried her fierce progeny of fiery deluges, monstrous beasts, and ancient wars, and is ready for the great change. In the vision seen by Panthea and Ione a contrast is drawn between her colourful existence and the element of ice and cloud that enfolds the Moon. Now the new life streams out from her to her satellite, converting the desert into a garden and uniting them in the bond of joy. It is not all a dream of Shelley's; for it rests on an idea with which the poets or theologians or even some scientists had pleased themselves for ages, that of an even and genial climate spreading eventually the world over. (See note on line 356 f.) In the poets and theologians this transformation depended on the redemption or renascence of Man, and here the earth concludes her song with a forecast of his great achievements in the years to come.

In the fourth division (510-78) is a note of warning. The time may come when evil will break loose again. Demogorgon, the commander of the daemons and the repository of the truth, calls his ministers from the natural and the spiritual realms and declares the Shelleyan ethic the only way for Man to recover his power and glory if ever they were lost.

Prometheus Unbound is not a drama in the proper sense, but more like a Mystery or musical composition. A drama is organically connected, but in the *Prometheus* the two

protagonists are abstractions thinly personified and incapable of interaction. Moreover, Shelley has to invent or refashion his mythology, and his personages cannot raise in the reader the understanding or emotion that in the *Mysteries* God or Demon could. There is another weakness inherent in the subject. Shelley, after designing Prometheus and Asia on a majestic scale, 'reduces their proportions to the level of common life'. It is as if sculpture from an infirmer hand had been joined on to the head of a masterpiece. This occurs especially in the third Act, when the lovers meet with no more to suffer or to do, and lapse into girlish happiness. For Shelley has lost the support of his Aeschylean model and the theme of martyrdom that he understood so well. But the weaker strokes do not spoil the glory of the poem. It is the shining monument in English poetry of the age in which it was written. For then, under the pall of the Holy Alliance, young men who were 'strong in love' resumed the spirit of the great days when 'human nature seemed to be born again' and 'the whole earth the beauty wore of promise'. Nor did Shelley himself over-praise it as a work of art. 'If that is not durable poetry tried by the severest tests', he said to Trelawny, 'I do not know what is. It is a lofty subject not inadequately treated, and should not perish with me. . . . My friends say my *Prometheus* is too wild, ideal, and perplexed with imagery. It may be so. It is original and cost me severe labour. Authors, like mothers, prefer the children who have given them most trouble.' (*Records*, I. xv. 118.)

NOTES

PROMETHEUS UNBOUND

TITLE-PAGE. The verse quoted is in Cicero, *Tusc. Disp.* ii. 60, from the *Epigoni* of an unknown author. Amphiaraus, a renowned Seer, took part in the war of the Seven against Thebes, and was saved from his pursuers by Zeus, who caused the earth to swallow him. He became an oracular God.

PREFACE. P. 6. Baths of Caracalla. See the description of these ruins in Shelley's letter to Peacock of 23 March 1819.

P. 9. The Scotch philosopher was Forsyth in his *Principles of Moral Science*.

Act I

Stage direction. The Indian Caucasus was a name given after Alexander's expedition into India to the whole range of mountains bounding the sub-continent to the north. It was thereafter called Caucasus Indicus. Shelley preferred this name, perhaps, for his lasting memory of *The Missionary, an Indian Tale*, by Lady Morgan, where the scene is laid in a valley in the mountain girdle of Kashmir.

1-17. The lonely grandeur of the scene and the Titanic form and mind are rendered in verse full of Aeschylean echoes. With these are blended some accents of Milton's Satan, and a humarer and more modern note, which we know for Shelley's own.

4. Cf. Aesch. *P.V.* 32 ὁρθοστάδην ἄνπνος.

20-22. Cf. Aesch. *P.V.* 15, the φάραγξ δυσχείμερος, storm-rent chasm, and l. 20 τῷδ' ἀπανθρώπω πάγω | ἵν' οὐτε φωνὴν οὐτε τὸν μορφὴν βροτῶν | ὅψη, 'rock unclimb by man where thou shalt never know human voice or form'. And cf. Southey's *Thalaba*, vi. 12.

24. Aesch. *P.V.* 88–92:

ωδῖος αἰθῆρ καὶ ταχύπτεροι πνοαί,
ποταμῶν τε πηγαί, ποντίων τε κυμάτων
ἀνήριθμον γέλασμα, παμμῆτόρ τε γῆ,
καὶ τὸν πανόπτην κύκλον ἡλίου καλῶ.

‘O holy Aether, and swift-winged winds, and River-wells, and laughter innumEROUS of yon sea waves! Earth, mother of us all, and all-viewing cyclic Sun, I call on you.’

31. Cf. Shelley’s Letter to Peacock, 24 July 1816, on the crawling glaciers of Mont Blanc.

34. Aesch. *P.V.* 1022 *Διός . . . πτηνὸς κύων, δαφοινὸς αἰετός.*

38. Aesch. *P.V.* 1016 f.

44. Aesch. *P.V.* 23 f.:

ἀσμένω δέ σοι
ἢ ποικιλείμων νῦξ ἀποκρύψει φάσος,
πάχνην θ' ἔψαν ἡλιος σκεδᾷ πάλιν.

‘Welcome shall night be to thee with her garniture of stars when she hides the sun, and the sun again when he scatters the morning rime.’

58–231. He conjures the Spirits of the mountains, and their other brethren, to repeat the curse, but they dare not (58–131). Instead of them the invisible Spirit of the dead generation of men who heard it begins to say it. But that is of no use either, for Prometheus is a god and cannot understand the inorganic speech of the dead (131–8). Prometheus then asks the Earth to speak in living language, but she dare not. She undertakes, however (145), to say it again in the language of the dead, for after all he may understand, though the gods may not, for he is wiser than they. But the language again fails upon him (150–1). Here the Earth diverges into her memory of the hour in which she bore him till Jupiter chained him to the rock, and plague and ruin fell upon the planet (152–79). An expedient is at last found; for there are two worlds, one of reality, and the other of the shadows of the real ‘underneath the grave’.

Among these phantasms is that of Jupiter, which Prometheus summons to say the curse, for the Shade of Jupiter is fit to say the evil thing (215-21).

65. Cf. Milton, *Par. Lost*, i. 594-6.

73. Cf. the curse of Cronos when he fell from his throne, Aesch. *P.V.* 910.

74. Aesch. *P.V.* 185, terror of the chorus at his words; and 932.

110. Cf. *Alastor*, 323.

142. Under the reign of evil the revolutions of Earth are torture to her.

168. Virgil, *A. v.* 528 'crinemque volantia sidera ducunt', and Milton, *Par. Lost*, ii. 710. Cf. the *morbus caeli* in Virgil, *G.* iii. 478 f.

191. Professor Jacques Duchesne-Guillemin of the University of Liège sends me the following note: 'Shelley must have remembered the narrative in a late part of the *Avesta*, called *Hadhokht Nask*, which tells how the soul of the righteous man, three days after death, meets his own conscience "among plants and fragrant odours". As there is no trace in our Oriental documents of Zoroaster meeting his conscience or self before death, Shelley appears to have combined the passage mentioned above with the legend relating to Zoroaster's visions of Ahura Mazdah or of Vohu manah (Good Thought) or of still other deities.' He refers me to J. H. Moulton, *Early Zoroastrianism*, p. 92, where this allusion of Shelley's is discussed. Moulton says that there was such a legend about Zoroaster but gives no evidence. The French Encyclopedists knew the *Avesta* and wrote about it. Shelley was subject to strange visions, and at Casa Magni followed an image of himself in a trance; cf. *Shelley Memorials*, 191, and Medwin, ii. 300. Shelley perhaps had his information from Peacock.

195 f. This strange thought is perhaps an expansion of Homer, *Od. xi.* 601-14. Odysseus sees Heracles in Hades with bow uncased and shaft upon the string in act to shoot wild beasts. 'And after him I descried the mighty Heracles,

his phantom, I say; but as for himself he hath joy at the banquet among the deathless Gods.'

212. Typhon, the most furious of the Titans, was branded by the bolt of Zeus, and buried under Aetna, whose streams of lava were his breath, Aesch. *P.V.* 353-74.

235. Homer, *Od.* xi. 90:

*Ηλθε δ' ἐπὶ ψυχὴ Θηβαίου Τειρεσίαο·
χρύσεον σκῆπτρον ἔχων.

262. Aesch. *P.V.* 992-6:

πρὸς ταῦτα ριπτέσθω μὲν αἰθαλοῦσσα φλόξ,
λευκοπτέρω δὲ νιφάδι καὶ βροντήμασι
χθονίοις κυκάτω πάντα καὶ ταρασσέτω·
γνάμψει γάρ οὐδὲν τῶνδέ με.

'Let him now hurl his blanching lightnings down,
And with his white-winged snows and mutterings deep
Of subterranean thunders mix all things,
Confound them in disorder. None of this
Shall bend my sturdy will.'

272. Aesch. *P.V.* 907 f.; esp. 915-19:

πρὸς ταῦτα νῦν
θαρσῶν καθήσθω τοῖς πεδαροίοις κτύποις
πιστός, τινάσσων τ' ἐν χεροῦν πύρπνουν βέλος.
οὐδὲν γάρ αὐτῷ ταῦτ' ἐπαρκέσει τὸ μὴ οὐ
πεσεῖν ἀτίμως πτώματ' οὐκ ἀνασχετά.

'Let him sit and brave his doom and fix his faith on his supernal noises, brandishing his fire-breathing bolt—for these things shall not save him from a shameful and cruel fall.'

292. The ill deeds and the good are both infinite, i.e. their effects are illimitable; and he and his solitude are infinite, i.e. indefinitely enduring.

306. The Earth mistakes his penitence for a confession of defeat: see Ione's words, 314.

324. The winged sandals and serpent-cinctured wand are

always assigned to Hermes, the messenger. He uses his wand as the God of sleep to shut and open men's eyes, and to guide men's souls to the lower world. Homer, *Od.* v. 47, Virgil, *A.* iv. 238.

326 f. The Furies (in Greek Erinyes, in Latin Furii or Dirae) were angry goddesses who search for the criminal and accomplish the curse upon him. They were called Eumenides, or the well-disposed, because they could be appeased by expiatory rites. They live in Erebus and are described in Attic tragedy as the Daughters of Night or Darkness. They were sometimes described as having wings, and serpents twined in their hair. Shelley has in mind the Furies in the *Eumenides* hunting down Orestes, and checked by Apollo. Cf. l. 338 with *Eumenides* 244 f.

καὶ νῦν ὅδ' ἐνθάδ' ἐστί ποι καταπτακών.

ὅσμη βροτείων αἰμάτων με προσγελᾷ. (252, 253)

'Somewhere here he is crouching, for the scent of mortal blood greeteth me blithely.'

345. The rivers of the nether world, Phlegethon and Cocytus.

346. Geryon, a three-bodied giant who lived on an island in the far West, where he was slain by Heracles. In Homer there is one Gorgon who lives in the nether world. In Hesiod there are three, the most terrible being Medusa—winged forms with snake locks, whose looks turn the beholder to stone. They lived on the western edge of the world, hard by the realm of Night. Chimaera, a fire-breathing monster of Lycia, lion in front, goat in the middle, and snake at the end. The Sphinx was a winged being, with the body of a lion and the face of a maiden. It settled on a hill near Thebes, and slew all passers-by who could not answer its riddle. Oedipus answered the riddle, and the Sphinx destroyed itself. This led ultimately to the undoing of Oedipus, to his marriage with his mother (unnatural love) and the conflict between his sons (more unnatural hate). Of these beings only the Gorgon was a Fury. Milton in *Par. Lost*, x. 616 writes of Sin and Death as

Dogs of Hell; Sophocles, *Oed. Tyr.* 391, of the Sphinx, *ἢ ράψιδὸς . . . κίων.*

353. Aesch. *P.V.* 19 *ἄκοντά σ' ἄκων . . . προσπασσαλεύσω τῷδε . . . πάγω.* These words were spoken by Hephaestus. Hermes (Mercury) is in Aeschylus an insolent god.

371. Aesch. *P.V.* 168 f.

377. For the metaphor, cf. cancelled passage of *Ode To Liberty.*

387. *King Lear*, III. ii. 4.

390. For the world I bestowed on him, for my former friendship which he has lost.

394. The reproaches disturb the insecure complacency of those who have, as they think, taken revenge.

398. The sword of Damocles. He was a friend of the elder Dionysius, the tyrant of Syracuse. He extolled the tyrant's happiness, and, that he might know what happiness really is, he was made to sit at a banquet, in the course of which he saw a naked sword hanging over his head by a single horse-hair.

401. Aesch. *P.V.* 937, Prometheus to Hermes:

σέβου, προσεύχου, θῶπτε τὸν κρατοῦντ' ἀεί.
ἔμοι δ' ἔλασσον Ζηνὸς ἢ μηδὲν μέλει.
δράτω, κρατείτω τόνδε τὸν βραχὺν χρόνον
ὅπως θέλει· δαρὸν γὰρ οὐκ ἄρξει θεοῖς.

'Do thou revere, and pray, and fawn on thine everlasting King; but I reck of Zeus less than nothing. Let him do as he will and lord it out his little while; he shall not rule the Gods for long.'

429. Aesch. *P.V.* 966. To Hermes:

τῆς σῆς λατρείας τὴν ἐμὴν δυσπραξίαν | . . . οὐκ ἀν ἀλλάξαιμι.

'I would not change my evil hap for thy servitude.' And Aesch. *P.V.* 971.

433. Aesch. *P.V.* 1017.

437. Milton, *Par. Lost*, iv. 555, 590.

442. Swinburne refers 'hollow' to the Furies and not to their wings. See l. 472.

454. Again a reminiscence of the Chorus of Furies in the *Eumenides*, 246 τετραυματισμένον γάρ ὡς κύων νεθρὸν | πρὸς αἷμα καὶ σταλαγμὸν ἐκματεύομεν. 'We track him by the drippings of blood as the dog the wounded fawn.'

470. So in *Ginevra*, 83–90, a thought spreads a chill atmosphere round the thinker, whom it makes an image of itself. Cf. III. iii. 165.

472. Aesch. *Eumenides*, 791, 845. The Furies are *Kόραι Νυκτός*.

483. 'Thou think'st we will dwell in the bodily organs which affect thought and feeling, getting as near to the soul as we can.' Shelley recalls the passage in Plato's *Republic* (x. 611 c) on Glaucus the Sea God, who is a beautiful being underneath the incrustation of shells and seaweed. He develops this idea in the essay *On Love* and often elsewhere in the theory of 'the soul within the soul', the 'epipsychedion', the untainted and inviolable part of the soul which cannot degrade or sin. It 'describes a circle around its proper paradise, which pain and sorrow and evil dare not overleap'. This is a doctrine supported by Plotinus and frequent in religious mysticism.

500. i.e. having furled your wings.

567. The French Revolution.

574. Rev. xiv. 18; Isa. lxiii.

604. In *Queen Mab*, vii. 161 f., Christ is represented as teaching men truth and peace in semblance only, that he might awake in them the bigotry in which he rejoiced. In a note to the passage Shelley inclines to think him a political pretender. After these pronouncements he arrived at the view expressed in these verses, distinguishing Christ from historical Christianity. In the *Essay on Christianity* (1815) he brings Christ's teaching into conformity with his own beliefs. In the fragmentary Prologue to *Hellas* (1821), Christ, Mahomet, and Satan appear after the Book of Job among the Sons of God in heaven, and Christ is the champion of Hellas

and light, and Plato his forerunner. In a chorus of the play a new view is taken—Christianity is the higher dispensation which superseded the religions of Greece and of Mahomet, and must itself be superseded (1090 f.). In the *Triumph of Life* (1822) Plato is chained to the car of Life, and only Christ and Socrates are mentioned among those who 'could not tame their spirits to the conquerors' (134).

609. Southey's *Thalaba*, ix. 20, the ounce hunting the gazelle. The ounce is a kind of lynx or wild cat, used especially in Persia for hunting. It is among the fierce animals who play before Adam and Eve in Milton, *Par. Lost*, iv. 344. Shelley is plainly referring to his own expulsion from Field Place.

627. 'the wise want love' may refer to Godwin, and 'those who love want wisdom' to himself.

638-40. Aesch. *P.V.* 752-4:

ἢ δυσπετῶς ἀν τοὺς ἐμοὺς ἄθλους φέροις,
δτῷ θανεῖν μέν ἐστιν οὐ πεπρωμένον·
αὐτῇ γὰρ ἦν ἀν πημάτων ἀπαλλαγῆ.

'Hardly wouldest thou bear my distresses, I who am not fated to die; and yet death had been a release from my woes.'

659. To Shelley the human mind is vast and mysterious, like a dim cave. Cf. *The Revolt of Islam*, III. xxii, *Cenci*, II. ii. 89; or the ravine of a mountain river, the river being man's thoughts, *Mt. Blanc*, I f.; or a splendid fane, *Prom. Unb.* i. 377; a river-course underground, *Prince Athanase*, 98 f.; a boundless atmosphere, see below, 672-8, cf. *Cenci*, III. i. 170; an ocean, *Prom. Unb.* iv. 96, and Fragment *To Byron*; or a wilderness, see below, i. 742; and cf. Shelley's criticism (in Mrs. Shelley's note to the play) on Sophocles, *Oed. Tyr.* 67 πολλὰς δ' ὁδοὺς ἐλθόντα φροντίδος πλάνοις.

691. The prophecy of human perfection takes its rise from thee, and thou wilt fulfil it.

745. He does not regard *them*, but the beauty in them which is suggestive of the ideal.

760. Milton, *Par. Lost*, v. 283 f.
his feet

Shaddowd from either heele with featherd maile
Skie-tinctur'd grain.

774. Forman quotes the *Symposium* of Plato: For Homer says that the Goddess Calamity is delicate, and that her feet are tender. 'Her feet are soft,' he says, 'for she treads not upon the ground, but makes her path upon the heads of men. (*Iliad*, xix. 91-93.)

780. Though Ruin dogs all ideal endeavours.

782. Rev. vi. 8.

821. Panthea cannot rest but in close communion with his spirit.

ACT II. SCENE I

26. Aesch. *P. V.* 125, *αἱθήρ δ' ἐλαφραῖς πτερύγων ρίπαις ὑποσυρίζει*—'whirs with the light beatings of wings'. Milton, *Par. Lost*, v. 268-70.

30-31. The impress of Prometheus' presence is still upon her; see below, where Asia sees a vision of him in her eyes.

49. Cf. the Homeric epithets, *βαθύκολπος*, *βαθύζων*.

43-55. This converse is not carried on by words, but the minds of Prometheus and Asia are impressed upon Panthea's as she sleeps by means of dreams, and they read the dreams in her eyes by a sort of crystal-gazing.

52-53. Cf. 79-81.

70-89. Shelley always develops with peculiar intensity this image of one soul dissolved into another. Cf. *The Revolt of Islam*, vi. xxxvi; *Epipsychedion*, 573. Panthea's spirit was absorbed like the dew under the radiating spirit of Prometheus, 'Until it passed,' i.e. his presence (l. 80) passed from my dream.

74. See note on II. iv. 133, and cf. Letter to Peacock, 9 November 1818, describing a Christ Beatified by Correggio at Bologna, 'the lips parted, but scarcely parted with the breath of intense but regulated passion.'

94 f. Panthea is charged, so to speak, with the Spirit of Prometheus and his love for Asia. Through Panthea this emotion passes into Ione, and is felt by her as a vague desire or delight.

117. *The Revolt of Islam*, xi. v.

145. A good instance of the survival in Shelley of the myth-making faculty. So Sophocles speaks (*O.C.* 687) of the *νομάδες κρήναι*, streams that wander forward with pauses and turnings aside like grazing cattle.

207-8. On one interpretation of what these Oceanides stand for 'Love and Faith are becoming conscious of their powers as practical forces for the regeneration of the world, and are setting out hand in hand to accomplish this; Ione, or Hope, being left behind to console Prometheus' (Todhunter).

Act II. SCENE II

1-40. Cf. the Chorus in praise of the sacred covert of the Erinyes at Colonus, Sophocles, *O.C.* 668-80: 'where the nightingale a constant guest trills her clear note in the green glades dwelling amid the wine-dark ivy, unvisited by sun, un vexed by wind of any storm' (Jebb's translation).

10. Cf. *Midsummer Night's Dream*, II. i. 15.

37. Rising frequent as reeds in a lake is the simplest interpretation. Forman sees here a reference 'to the proverbial sweetness acquired by the sound of the flute in passing across still water'. Rossetti is inclined to propose 'lake-resounded'.

41 f. Demogorgon's law moves men to its own ends while they believe their own wills are moving them. Those who saw (52) may mean simply men of insight, or, as Todhunter suggests, the Necessitarian School. First the persuasion of the Spirit is gentle, while the movement is in the stage of thought or aspiration; then comes the storm and stress of fulfilment.

62. The mountain in which is Demogorgon's cave.

64-97. The state of MS. *B* shows that these lines were an afterthought.

89. Virgil, *Eclogue* vi. 18 f. Two shepherds bind Silenus in a cave, and force him to sing. 'Nam saepe senex spe carminis ambo | luserat.' Silenus, a wood god, who had the gift of prophecy; he was the chief of the Satyrs and the teacher of Dionysus. 'thwart': transverse, cross-grained.

90. 'undrawn' means 'unmilked'.

Act II. SCENE III

9. A Maenad or Thyad, an attendant of Dionysus, who, in company with Silenus and the Satyrs, celebrated his rites with wild enthusiasm. Cf. Sophocles, *Trach.* 216-20. *Evoe* was the shout they raised to the god.

12 f. This is the theory of a God of limited power who has to contend in shaping the world with a material he cannot completely master. It is found in Plato's *Timaeus* (29 f.) where it is said that God made the world to be perfectly good like himself 'as far as that was attainable', for he had to contend with a disorderly substance into which he brought order as far as he could. Again, in *Laws*, x (896 f.) the Soul that God puts to create the world, being perfectly good, is opposed by another and a disorderly Soul. 'The best Soul takes care of the world and guides it along the good path. But if the world moves wildly and irregularly then we must say that the evil Soul guides it.' This has been taken by some interpreters, and may have been taken by Shelley, to mean that there are two creative Souls, good and evil, in conflict with each other.

28 f. Cf. Shelley's Letter to Peacock describing Mont Blanc, 22 July 1816.

54-98. These lines were interpolated into MS. *B* as an afterthought.

59-60. Life and phenomena are bars from the ultimate truth. 'Which seem and are', which exist and are yet semblances. Cf. above, ll. 12-16, and the Platonic distinction between the

phenomenal world and the ideal reality, especially as set forth in the parable of the prisoners in the cave watching shadows on the wall. *Republic*, vii. 514 f.

83. i.e. not loosed from the cloud.

96. 'through life's portal', i.e. into the life in the upper air.

97. Snake-like, either (1) because of the inevitability with which it fastens on Jove as the serpents on Laocoön, or its fell secrecy, the snake's attraction for Shelley consisting in its solitary and mysterious life (cf. the lines, 'Wake the serpent not'); or (2) an allusion to the philosophy of the Gnostic Ophites, to whom the snake was the symbol of knowledge, the redeeming and saving principle in man. Cf. Professor Sieper, in Herrig's *Archiv*, cxx. 315 f. A doom lies under God's throne in *The Revolt of Islam*, x. xxxvi.

ACT II. SCENE IV

7 f. In 1813 Shelley read a fragmentary poem on the Zoroastrian cosmology by T. L. Peacock entitled *Ahrimanes*. He alludes to it in a well-known letter to Peacock of 24 July 1816, on the terrors of Mont Blanc. Two versions of the beginning of the poem in metre and two outlines of the intended story in prose are published in the Halliford edition of Peacock's *Works*, ed. H. F. B. Brett-Smith and C. E. Jones, vol. vii. The story begins with Necessity, 'parent of being, mistress of the spheres', inexorable disposer, who has delegated her empire to two gods in turn; and now the age of innocence, equality, and unbidden plenty under Oromazes is past, and his enemy, the sinister Ahrimanes, holds sway. Yet the accession of the evil one is not entirely harm and loss; for 'cloudless sunshine and oblivious joy' could never have called out the mind and will of man as now his tribulations do, the heavy load of Nature's cruelty and his own sin. Nor is Oromazes for ever done with: somewhere apart 'enfurled in clouds', he bides his time, while here or there his despised votaries expect his second empire when man, twice blessed, shall retain his maturity and recover

his innocence. In *The Revolt of Islam* the High God watches the appointed strife of his two subordinates, Good and Evil, from his dwelling in light, and descends in a shroud of fire to the Valhalla of his enthroned saints to bid welcome to the newcomers, whose cause he has at heart. In the Prologue to *Hellas* as in the Book of Job, the Eternal calls his sons before him, 'gloomy or bright as the thrones they fill', and in spite of Christ's entreaty sends forth Satan to do and undo. Satan's reign, however, is to give way to another age which will surpass the splendours of ancient Greece.

These ideas are presented, though indistinctly, in the dialogue between Demogorgon and Asia, suggested by that between the Chorus and Prometheus in Aeschylus (515 f.). Demogorgon says that the good powers and passions were 'made' (or rather were given out) by 'God', and the evil by one Unnameable who is over against God. Above both is Love, not liable to Time or Fate or Change as they are. For 'God, Almighty God' in his strife with his rival is subject to reverses or frustrations, and is almighty in the sense that the Supreme Power is on his side and will at last cause him to prevail. He is Peacock's Oromazes, and the Unnameable is Ahrimanes. Asia asks repeatedly who the Unnameable is, and Demogorgon can only say 'He reigns'. He cannot be Jupiter as Asia says, for Jupiter owes his power to Prometheus and trembled at his curse. Jupiter makes himself the vassal or lieutenant of the Unnameable. The Supreme Evil cannot be imaged: it is inherent in the world of Time.

The order of cosmic events is then as follows: Love dwelt with Light in an original Heaven and Earth (32-33). But into this untroubled order there entered Vicissitude, or Time, and it is through a changeful and temporal Nature that Evil came in and strove with Good. The order of Evil mixed with Good came in with Saturn (33-43), but his reign was short, for Time was 'envious' of it. He, a *roi fainéant*, did nothing for men, but confined them to a placid and witless contentment, and this was evil already. Soon, however, they aspired to a

higher mode of life, and Prometheus came in to assist them. He gave them Jupiter for their good lord, and when Jupiter went over to the Evil One, and fostered all the mischief within and around them, he armed them against him in heart and mind. All the while, however, Love is working through Prometheus to gain the mastery of Nature. Yet, even when Nature is assimilated to Love, Evil will not be utterly cast out—cannot be while Time and Nature exist. It will be chained; but it will still affect men in some degree, and may, now and then, break loose (III. iv. 200-4; iv. 565 f., *The Revolt of Islam*, v. li. 2229-32). Only beyond Time and the world of sense, only where Love is all in all, can there be pure and changeless Good.

12-16. The tears blur the vision of the flowers. Rossetti refers to *Witch of Atlas*, xiv.

32-100. Aesch. *P.V.* 199-256, 442-506.

61. Nepenthe, cf. Milton's *Comus*, 675, and Spenser's *Faerie Queene*, iv. iii. 43. Homer, *Od.* iv. 221. It is the care-dispelling drug (*νη* and *πένθος*, grief). Moly is the drug which Hermes gave to Odysseus to counteract the potion of Circe, *Od.* x. 302; *Comus*, 636. Amaranth, the *ἀμάραντος* or unfading flower (*α*, and *μαράνω*, to fade), cf. Milton, *Par. Lost*, iii. 353.

80. 'Mimic' means to copy or counterfeit and 'mock' apparently to counterfeit so well that the copy may be taken for the original.

83 f. 'Women with child gazing on statues (say the Venus of Melos) bring forth children like them—children whose features express the passion of the gaze and the perfection of sculptured beauty' (Swinburne). 'Men see reflected' is a relative clause meaning 'that are seen reflected'. 'Perish' means 'are consumed with passion'. Cf. Virgil, *Elegiques*, x. 10: 'Indigno cum Gallus amore peribat.'

133. Hours laden with fearful memories and hours of ardent hope. The imagery of these lines recalls Shelley's letter to Peacock, of 23 March 1819, describing the 'winged figures of Victory on the Arch of Constantine at Rome'. 'Their lips are parted, a delicate mode of exhibiting the fervour of their desire

to arrive at the destined meeting-place and to express the eager respiration of their speed. Indeed, no ideal figure of antiquity, not destined to some representation directly exclusive of such a character, is to be found with closed lips.' Cf. II. i. 74; II. v. 48, 49.

ACT II. SCENE V

10-14. Cf. Milton's *Ode on the Nativity*, 6, 7.

21. *ῥάλος*, any transparent stone: and so the sea. Aphrodite was fabled to have come among men in a sea-shell, from which she landed at Cythera. This was a mountainous island off the coast of Laconia in the Peloponnese, and here the Phoenicians introduced the worship of Aphrodite or Astarte for which it was celebrated. As a former seat of her worship was the originally Phoenician Cyprus, she would have floated to Cythera, past the shores which bear Asia's name.

43. Cf. *Sonnet to Byron*, 13, 14, and Browning's well-known lines of the 'loving worm' which is 'diviner than a loveless God', in *Christmas Eve*, v.

48 f. We know from the answering lyric of Asia and from the omitted passage following this lyric in MS. B, that the Voice in the Air is that of Prometheus.

51. Cf. *Epipsychedion*, 87-104, where the whole description of Emilia Viviani is an expansion of this lyric. In the essay *On the Literature and Arts of the Athenians* he writes about Greek women: 'Their eyes could not have been deep and intricate from the workings of the mind, and could have entangled no heart in soul-enwoven labyrinths.'

60. Cf. Plato's *Symposium*, 211, Shelley's translation. 'What then shall we imagine to be the aspect of the supreme Beauty itself, simple, pure, uncontaminated with the intermixture of human flesh and colours, and all other idle and unreal shapes attendant on mortality; the divine, the original, the supreme, the monoeidic Beautiful itself?'

72 f. The state of the MS. B shows that this lyric was

added as an afterthought. It follows the omitted passage after 71 (Locock, 31). This lyric is an answer to the foregoing. The soul of Asia floats on the sweet singing or the passion expressed in it, like a boat on a stream, and the soul of Prometheus is the companion and pilot, who takes it on its course. The course is that of a vision, a vision of human life, and it leads by old age, stormy manhood, perilous youth, and dreamy infancy, out of time into the 'diviner day'—that is the eternal world. The perils and weaknesses of human life are left behind. The boat and boatman are enveloped in music as the eternal paradise and its Promethean inhabitants are. The vision proceeds from Age to Childhood, perhaps because the soul in childhood is thought of as purest and nearest to its source. The boat in *The Witch of Atlas* is 'enchanted' like this one, and the Hermaphrodite, like the soul of Prometheus, spreads his pinions to the musical winds, and the vessel sails upwards to the springs of the river (xlv).

88–90. That is, not looking before and after and taking thought, but following the instinct of beauty.

ACT III. SCENE I

8. *Par. Lost*, i. 669.

25. Idaean from Mont Ida in the Troad. He was the son of the Dardanian King Tros, and was caught up to Olympus by an eagle from Zeus, where he ministered as cup-bearer to the Gods in eternal youth.

39. Lucan, *Pharsalia*, ix. 763–88, in the passage describing the sufferings of the Roman army from the serpents of the Numidian waste. The body of the soldier Sabellus is dissolved through the bite of a seps, Greek σῆψ.

48. gride, to cut or pierce; M.E. girden. Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, ii. 8, 36; Milton, *Par. Lost*, vi. 329.

72. The image of a vulture or an eagle wheeling in the air in deadly combat with a serpent fascinated Shelley. In the first

canto of *The Revolt of Islam* such a combat is made an allegory of the battle between evil and good. See note to II. iii. 97. The source is probably Homer, *Il.* xii. 200-7. Cf. Aeschylus, *Choephoroi*, 247-9, and *Alastor*, 227.

ACT III. SCENE II

25-28. Cf. *Euganean Hills*, 320-6.

38. In *The Revolt of Islam*, Canto I, the serpent, the Spirit of Good, is changed into the Morning Star. The star Venus is Hesperus at evening and Lucifer when in the morning she precedes the sun.

ACT III. SCENE III

1. Heracles in Greek mythology is a deliverer and saviour of men distressed. 'Him (the eagle) the bold son of Alcmena slew, and warded the fell affliction from Prometheus, and set him free from his pains, not against the will of Zeus the high counsellor, who sought that the fame of Theban Heracles should be wider yet over the bounteous earth.' (Hesiod, *Theogony* 522 f., tr. Mair.)

10 f. We have two descriptions of the cave that Prometheus and Asia were now to inhabit (III. iii. 10 f. and 124 f.). The descriptions do not agree, but we may suppose that they refer to the same place. And there are two temples, now in ruins, which are evidently distinct (III. iii. 127 f. and 160 f.). The first of these was built after the curse had fallen over the spot where the Earth panted in agony and her breath became a poison. Those who inhaled it set up an oracle there of evil influence that lured men to war and faithless actions. The other temple was built in honour of Prometheus and became a centre of his worship as the exemplar of Hope. The cave, we may presume, lay between these temples or to the side of them. James Thomson finds a charm in these obscurities as being eloquent of Shelley's disregard for details of time or place.

41. The bees fetch honey from Enna, a hill and a town in the centre of Sicily, to their island homes on the river Himera, which flows northward to the sea.

49–53. This is Hutchinson's text. I take Locock's interpretation. The apparitions are the artistic conceptions gradually becoming brighter in the mind, as it apprehends the forms or the Platonic ideas of truth and casts upon the apparitions the concentrated rays of which these forms consist. The apparitions thus become clear and take the character of essential truth (reality). Locock compares l. 748—'Forms more real than living man.'

49–62. Cf. *Defence of Poetry*. 'The great secret of morals is love: or a going out of our own nature and an identification of ourselves with the beautiful which exists in thought, action, or person not our own. . . . The great instrument of moral good is the imagination; and poetry administers to the effect by acting on the cause.' 'It is impossible to feel them (the spells cast by Petrarch) without becoming a portion of that beauty which we contemplate.'

65. Proteus the Sea God was a soothsayer—'that Ancient One of the Sea whose speech is sooth (*νημερτής*)'—and so Odysseus inquired of him the course of his future wanderings (*Od.* iv. 384 f.). That Proteus should give this shell to Asia as a nuptial boon, and that Ione (or Hope) should keep it in hiding in the evil days are appropriate thoughts. The shell contains the virtue that proceeds from the marriage, and its music diffuses this virtue through the world. Hogg (ch. i) tells us that an ancestor of the poet's, Sir Guyon de Shelley, a Paladin, 'carried about with him three conches fastened to the inside of his shield, tipped respectively with brass, with silver, and with gold. When he blew the first shell all giants, however huge, fled before him. When he put the second to his lips all spells were broken; and when he made the golden one vocal, the law of God was immediately exalted and the law of the Devil annulled wherever the potent sound reached.'

97. The antelope is to Shelley the image of gentleness and

grace, or of life purified of grossness. Cf. *Alastor*, 103; *Epipsy-chidion*, 75; *The Revolt of Islam*, x. ii.

105 f. Cf. the description of the golden age in Hesiod's *Works and Days*, 109 f. See Introduction, p. 174.

113, 114. Our earthly life is the real death, and is a veil that screens the life indeed; what we call death is the lifting of that veil. Cf. the sonnet beginning:

Lift not the painted veil which those who live

Call Life:

The metaphor, then, seems to be from a painted or figured curtain before the stage of a theatre. The painted figures are quite different from the scene which is disclosed when the curtain rises; the scene is the reality, and they unrealty. So sc. iv. 57-59, of the dreams of sleep. Shelley often avers, like Euripides (*Polyeides*, fr. vii)—see Plato's *Gorgias*, 492—that 'death is life and life is death', and says in *Adonais* (xxi. 6) that 'Death lends what Life must borrow'.

148-52. It is best to suppose that he is the same being as the Spirit of the Earth in the next scene who apparently can take different shapes, like Ariel. He calls Asia 'Mother' (sc. iv. 25, 33), and it was from the love in her eyes that he rekindled his torch. Panthea, however, says (sc. iv. 23) that he only called her Mother, not knowing any more than she (Panthea) does, whence he had sprung.

154. Nysa, where Dionysus was nursed in his youth: Homer, *Il.* vi. 153; *Par. Lost*, iv. 275.

162. Architrave, the part of an entablature resting immediately on the columns.

168-74. Shelley in the MS. B refers to Plato's *Republic*, 328, where a race is spoken of in which men carry torches on horseback and, while riding, pass them to one another.

ACT III. SCENE IV

7. Though Ione is so surprised at the appearance of this Spirit, it seems better to identify it with the Spirit of the last scene.

19. A dipsas (*δυψάς*) was a serpent whose bite induced a consuming thirst (Lucan, ix. 718).

36-39. Cf. Virgil, *Eclogue*, iv. 24: 'Occidet et serpens et fallax herba veneni | occidet.' The reports of the two Spirits repeat the thought of *Queen Mab*, viii. and ix. 40 f. The passage reminds us of the wanderings of the Witch of Atlas among the haunts of men.

54. The sound of the shell.

95, 96. I must answer love with love, radiance with radiance.

98 f. It has been objected that there is redundancy in making two Spirits report the same event. But the event is so great that it will bear narrating twice. The Spirit of the Earth speaks of outward and natural change, the Spirit of the Hour of inward and spiritual.

109-10. For 'vegetable fire', cf. *Par. Lost*, iv. 220, and Southey's *Thalaba*, i. 31.

111-24. Rossetti has remarked that these lines seem a needless deviation where they stand. The MS. B shows them to have been added by an afterthought.

118. See the letter to Peacock, 26 January 1819, on the ruins of Pompeii: 'They (the Greeks) lived in a perpetual commerce with external nature, and nourished themselves upon the spirit of its forms. . . . Their temples were mostly upaithric; and the flying clouds, the stars, or the deep sky were seen above.'

119. Amphisbaena (Lucan, ix. 719), a snake which can move either way.

136. Dante, *Inferno*, iii. 9.

147. In the legend about the vampire it is a dead man who rises from his grave at night and wanders about in the form of some animal biting sleepers in the neck, which turns them into other vampires.

167. glozed on. ME. glosen, to make glosses, hence the secondary meaning, to deceive or flatter.

185-7. Executions for adultery.

190. See note on III. iii. 113.

204. 'Inane' is the word used by Lucretius for Heaven: 'magnum inane', 'profundum inane'.

Act IV

There has been some discussion about the time of the drama (James Thomson, *Notes*). If we wish to make rhyme of the indications, Asia and Panthea are summoned by the Voices soon after daybreak (II. i. 163), enter the forest just before noon (II. ii.), and come to the mountain at daybreak again—the dawn, therefore, of a second day (II. iii. 28 f.). Demogorgon ascends to Heaven in the night before a third dawn (II. iv. 154; II. v. 1); Jupiter falls before the dawn comes (III. ii. 2-6, III. iv. 55); and the dawn is delayed (II. v. 10). Then follow the unbinding and the retreat to the cave. When the events in Act IV took place it is idle to inquire. The fourth Act opens, then, as soon as the sun asserts itself over the stars.

15, 16. They strew hair and not yew and tears not dew in sign of deep mourning. Cf. *Adonais*, xi, a passage which is based on Bion's *Elegy on Adonis*, in which the Loves clip their locks for the dead youth.

135 f. Ackermann cites Milton's *Comus*, 1012-17.

206-9. The reading of MS. B, 'light' instead of 'night', is obviously correct. Shelley fables that the Moon retires to a cave, and is there held in a dreamy sleep. Cf. *Prom. Unb.* II. iv. 91; III. iv. 94.

209. Cf. *Triumph of Life*, 210-13.

218. Cf. the divine chariots in Milton, *Par. Lost*, vi. 752; vii. 204: 'their wheels instinct with spirit'.

219 f. Rev. i. 14.

252. Their voices are heard among them, and at least in fragments are intelligible to Panthea.

270 f. In this picture of the sphere there may be a reminiscence of the planetary system described in Plato's *Timaeus*, 38, 39, in which 'those planets which revolved fastest appeared to be overtaken by those which moved slower, although they really overtook them'.

270-4. Among the Greeks victorious warriors were crowned with myrtle wreaths. There is perhaps a reference here to Harmodius and Aristogeiton who struck down Hipparchus the Tyrant and made Athens free in the year 514 b.c. In the hymn of Callistratus to Harmodius there is a refrain which runs—*ἐν μύρτου κλαδὶ τὸ ξίφος φορήσω*—‘I’ll wreath the sword in myrtle bough.’ To Shelley, tyranny and ignorance were consubstantial powers; the rays of knowledge are weapons to strike down tyrants. ‘Embleming’ must belong to ‘beams’; the light piercing the abyss suggests the union of heaven and earth.

280 f. Shelley had read Keats’s *Endymion* a few weeks before writing this Act (Letter to Ollier, 6 September 1819), and the present passage is manifestly influenced by the description of the deep and its wonders in that poem (iii. 119-41). Cf. also the dream of Clarence in Shakespeare’s *Richard III*, i. iv. 21-33. It is characteristic of Shelley that he is struck, not only by the strangeness and mystery of these things, but by their scientific significance.

282, 283. In a passage from Pietro Martire, quoted by Southey in a note to *Thalaba*, i. 31, we read: ‘They have found by experience that the vein of gold is a living tree, and that the same, by all ways that it spreadeth and springeth from the root by the soft pores and passages of the earth, putteth forth branches even unto the uttermost parts of the earth. . . . They have sometimes chanced upon whole caves sustained upon golden pillars, and this in the ways by which the branches ascend.’

297. Cf. Southey’s description of the sea-covered city of Baly and the tombs and dead bodies of its ancient kings in the *Curse of Kehama*, xvi.

304. Milton, *Par. Lost*, i. 200-8; vii. 413-15.

310. Book of Job, xl. 15; Milton, *Par. Lost*, vii. 471.

319. At ll. 514-16 Panthea says that the bright visions, that is, the visions of the Moon as a chariot and the Earth as an orb, fade away, and that in these ‘the singing Spirits rode and shone’. This apparently means that the antiphonal song of

the Earth and the Moon was sung by the Spirits seated in the chariot and the orb. But the language of the antiphones is not that of childlike beings such as the Spirit of the Earth who talks with Asia in the third Act. Moreover, at l. 342 the Earth speaks of the 'sceptred curse kneading down her children's bones' and throughout the dialogue each singer is evidently the planet itself and not its familiar Spirit. We can only assume then that the singers are the Earth and the Moon impersonated and regard what is said in 514-16 as a fault.

332 f. The Renovation of the Earth and the Moon is a theme that Shelley handled in *Queen Mab* (vi. 39 f., viii. 58-68). Hesiod wrote in *The Works and Days* (111 f.) of the Golden Age of unbidden plenty, and Virgil in the Fourth Eclogue of equal plenty in an age to come, when 'omnis feret omnia tellus'. In Jewish and Christian scriptures the rigour of the season, the partial barrenness of the Earth, and savagery in the animal world were regarded as a consequence of the Fall (Genesis iii. 17-19), and would be remedied when the Messiah should come and restore all things (Isaiah xi. 1-9 and lxv. 17-25, and the prophecy is found in apocalyptic books). St. Paul in Romans viii writes that the Creation was 'made subject to Vanity' (or frustration), 'not willingly' (not for its own fault, but Man's) but by Him who had 'subjected it in hope' (the hope of our redemption); and that all Nature groans like a woman in travail waiting for the fulfilment of the hope. There was an ancient theory that the faults in Nature were due to the obliquity of the Earth's axis to the ecliptic, and Milton, recounting the consequences of the Fall, says that God commanded angels to turn the ecliptic and the equator out of their coincidence and so induce the inclemency of the skies and the infertility of the soil (*Par. Lost*, x. 668 f.). In the eighteenth century scientists were of opinion that the obliquity was being gradually remedied and that sooner or later a warm climate and a fruitful soil would cover the whole earth. This expectation is set forth in Shelley's note on *Queen Mab*, vi. 45, 46: 'There is no great extravagance in presuming that the progress of the perpendi-

cularity of the poles may be as rapid as the progress of intellect; or that there should be a perfect identity between the moral and physical improvement of the human species.' And he adduces testimony from Laplace, Cabanis, and Bailly. See the article on the Renovation of Nature in the edition of the *Epistle to the Romans* by Sanday and Headlam.

394 f. Man collective and not men individual. Shelley was at one time delighted by the complete individualism that he found in Godwin and expressed in the vision of man renovated (III. iv. 193 f.). But later he substituted for it the ideal of man incorporated in a society where his service is perfect freedom, and his freedom instinctive service. For the metaphor of the sun ruling the stars and saving them from anarchy see *Ode to Liberty* (ii) and the lines in *The Mask of Anarchy* (331 f.) on the ancient laws of England.

The old laws of England—they
 Whose reverend heads with age are gray
 Children of a wiser day;
 And whose solemn voice must be
 Thine own echo—Liberty!

397-9. Shelley unites the quickest sense of sudden, free, and vivid life in Nature with a profoundly imaginative conception of natural law. Hence comes his isolative way of treating natural things, as though each were a being by itself, with a life and will of its own. Like the unquiet stars, his meteors and mists are untameable herds (*Prom. Unb.* iv. 546, and cf. *Euganean Hills*, 258), his constellations reel and dance like fire-flies (*Witch of Atlas*, xxviii), and his mists, planets, winds, and clouds are always wandering or flying through heaven, free to alight like birds on the wing (cf. *World's Wanderers*). And so the normal evolutions are often conceived as culminating in some moment of swift and wilful power; the buds in spring leap from their 'detested trance' (*Mt. Blanc*, 88-92), or the bees, lizards, and snakes issue like unimprisoned flames (*Adonais*, xviii).

414. See note to II. iv. 83, 84. The robes are the bodies or features.

444-9. The pyramidal shadow of the Earth cast by the Sun. So *Epipsychedion*, 228, 'the cone of our life's shade', i.e. the night of death. Cf. Milton, *Par. Lost*, iv. 776. Around the pyramid of darkness the light of the sun broods like a lover watching the beloved in sleep.

456-90. A splendid paraphrase of the moon's revolutions round the earth and of the law of gravitation.

473-5. Agave, daughter of Cadmus, King of Thebes. When her son, Pentheus, became King, he tried to prevent the women of the city from celebrating the festival of Dionysus on Mount Cithaeron. The women, in their madness, tore him to pieces, and his mother took part in the deed, mistaking her son for some animal. The legend is the subject of Euripides' *Bacchae*. Cadmaean, Theban.

491-4. Rossetti and Swinburne regard these lines as belonging to the Moon; Forman dissents from this. The lines 485-94 are wanting in MS. B, and must therefore be a late addition.

503-9. Panthea says, 'I arise out of the sound'. Ione replies, 'The sound has gone, it could only have been your own accents which made you think it was still here.'

534, 535. Even the brightest beams of verse obscure, instead of revealing, your state.

536, 537. Rossetti interprets: 'Either they are absorbed into the Universe of Spirit, and so continue to be cognizable by mortal men; or the state of physical change natural to men when alive is natural to them also when dead, and then the dead change, pass away, and, *qua* men, absolutely cease to exist.' See note to *Sensitive Plant*, iii. 126.

558-60. A crag on the edge of a precipice keeps its hold in agony and terror. The metaphor is splendidly elaborated in *Cenci*, III. i. 247-55. It is taken (see Shelley's note in the preface to *Cenci*) from *El Purgatorio de San Patricio* of Calderon.

THE SENSITIVE PLANT

In the only MS. copy of this poem, now in the library of Harvard University, it is dated March 1820. Besides the Harvard MS., Mrs. Shelley's edition of 1839 also offers variations.

FIRST PART

19–20. In the classical myth the youth Narcissus pined away for love of his own image, which he saw reflected in a fountain.

25–26. The bells of the hyacinth are regarded by the beholder as sending out a delicate music. A fragrant odour may underlie or penetrate the sight of a beautiful thing, and this imaginary music lurks within the vision of the bells.

54. The asphodel among the Greeks was sacred to Persephone, and was thought to possess miraculous powers. In Homer the souls of departed heroes dwell in meadows of asphodel (*Odyssey*, xi. 539, xxiv. 13).

70–74. We are told at 74–75 that the Sensitive Plant had no radiance or odour, i.e. no 'fruit' of its love. It was the only plant in the garden that 'wanted'—that is to say, was void of these qualities. 'But it loved more than ever' the others could. 'Belong to the giver' means, was in the power of any plant able to give.

76, 77. In Plato's *Symposium* Socrates argues that Love must be a want of something which the lover does not possess—the Beautiful and the Good (200, 201).

78. The wings droop under the load of music.

91. Shelley is fond of this flooding effect of the noonday haze. Cf. *Euganean Hills*, 206–13, 285 f. *To Jane; the Invitation*, 64–69.

SECOND PART

32. For the fingers as conductors of the spirit cf. *Epi-psychidion*, 97.

49. Shelley's love of insects is one of his most striking traits. He loved them for their vivid colours, their light-winged existences, and for the mystery of the chrysalis and the cocoon. Cf. *Woodman and Nightingale*, 24, *Letter to Maria Gisborne*, 3.

THIRD PART

5-12. This poring upon the horror of death recalls the similar passage in *Ginevra*, 145 f.

66-69. These lines subsequently struck Shelley as a fault, and they are cancelled in the Harvard MS. and omitted by Mrs. Shelley from her editions.

112. 'Mandrake—any plant of the genus *Mandragora* having very short stems, thick, fleshy, often forked roots and fetid lance-shaped leaves. The mandrake is poisonous, having emetic and narcotic properties.' *O.E.D.*

CONCLUSION

Here Shelley in passing puts in a fancy that appears in one of his early letters (to Elizabeth Hitchener, 24 Nov. 1811) of 'the soul of a flower' surviving its body. Having waived that idea and that of the lady's individual immortality (114-22), he proceeds to the solution he prefers. He has in mind a passage in Plato's *Republic* (vii. 514 f.) where humankind is compared with a row of manacled prisoners seated in a cave and unable to see anything but the shadows of their own forms and of other familiar objects cast by a fire behind them on a screen before them. The manacles are their low desires and vulgar inclinations that prevent them from apprehending truth, and 'the shadows of the dream' are their spurious conceptions of the world in which they live. The fire is the visible sun. If their chains were thrown aside and they were able to turn round they would see each other and the things that environ them as in fact they are. They would be 'approaching true being'. Could they emerge from the cave they would be in

the spiritual world under the Sun that is spiritually discerned, the eternal and divine, the author of all existence and the source of Beauty and Truth. At first and unless they persisted in it, the light would dazzle them, and many would return to the cave. Shelley applies this key. To us men, unless we can look beyond the sphere of time and place, and while we see only what is on the screen or in the firelight, death is evil and real. But this is appearance only. For in the dim light to which they are accustomed 'our organs are obscure' and cannot apprehend the eternal world from which all that is best in us has come and to which it will return. The lady and the garden are gone, but the beauty and the truth of which they were the transient vesture are everlasting. This conclusion is conveyed in his favourite image of our mortal experience as the figured curtain before the stage of the theatre, which is raised at death, and the authentic scene behind it and unlike it. The mystery of death and the after-life haunted him from his boyhood to the very end. In the essay *On a Future Life*, written in 1815 in the mood in which he wrote *Alastor*, he marshals the arguments that deny survival in any form and consider the soul as a secretion of the body. But his most constant conviction is that when the body perishes the soul is received and absorbed 'in true being' considered as a living and spiritual power, and takes part in its operation. That is the proposition in *Adonais* though the subject compels him to write of the soul of Keats as retaining its identity within the divinity. The possibility that the souls of those we have known and loved are hereafter dissolved and have no form of their own was always for him 'a contemplation of inexhaustible melancholy' (*Euganean Hills*, 1-44, and the lines *To William Shelley*). His last words on personal immortality are in a note to the drama of *Hellas* in 1821, where he says that the strength and universality of the desire for it is the best argument, or rather the only one, in its favour.

134. So in the *Adonais* the dreams and imaginings of Keats survive the brain that gave them birth.

A VISION OF THE SEA

Composed at Pisa early in 1820. There is a transcript in Mary Shelley's handwriting among the Harvard MSS., dated April 1820. The poem is characteristic. Shelley's world is peopled with the terrible fauna of the East, with lions, leopards, and tigers; the hyena, the ounce, the basilisk, and all kinds of serpent; the eagle, the vulture, the dog-fish, and the shark (cf. *Two Characters, Arethusa, Hellas*, 522). He frequently images the awful events in the lives of the brute creation, their deadly encounters, or the distress of hunted things, the mute fear of beast and bird at the oncoming of tempest (*Hellas*, 356, *Prom. Unb.* i. 581, *The Revolt of Islam*, ix. xi, xii. vi), or the wild terror of forest animals ringed round by fire (*ibid.* x. iv, x. xl); not allowing the pain and cruelty in these things to darken his view of Nature, but fascinated simply by daemonic energies. The infant laughing on the wreck belongs to the small company of Shelley's children whose spirit-like innocence stands out against the surroundings of evil, sorrow, or fear in which they are always placed (cf. the children in *The Revolt of Islam, Rosalind and Helen*).

5. 'She' can only be understood of the woman who figures in the scene many lines afterwards.

6. The Harvard reading, 'ruining', i.e. tumbling in like a ruin, is convincing.

15-17. The calm water at a depth below the surface is riven by the wind, and walls of calm water stand therefore about the chasm, gleaming dimly and reflecting the ruin above them.

24. Cope means vault, as in *Par. Lost*, vi. 214.

88. Cf. *To William Shelley*, i.

109, 110. Cf. *Ode to the West Wind*, 25.

145. Shelley is evidently thinking of the steamboat projected by Mrs. Gisborne's son, Henry Reveley, which was to ply in the Mediterranean from Leghorn. It was never

completed, however. The *Letter to Maria Gisborne* describes the engineery for this boat in Reveley's workroom.

162. See note on *Prom. Unb.* III. iii. 165.

ODE TO HEAVEN

There is a copy of this Ode in the Harvard MSS., dated 'Florence, December 1819'. A transcript also exists among the Shelley MSS. in the Bodleian Library, placed between pages of the *Prometheus Unbound*. Logically considered, the poem consists of a statement and two objections. The first Spirit praises Heaven for its glories and as the steadfast dome of the Universe. The Second Spirit, who in the Bodleian MS. is called 'A Remoter Voice' (Locock, p. 39), answers that Heaven is but the ante-chamber to a more glorious world. The Third Spirit, in MS. B, 'A louder and still remoter Voice', rebukes the first speaker for presumption in supposing that the world of his ken is the Universe; Heaven is but as a drop of dew among millions of others which gleam and disappear.

14. Contrast Wordsworth's steadfast Heavens and his 'stars in their old haunts'.

19. Plato, in the *Republic*, vi. 508, compares the Sun with the Good, the source of good, beauty, and truth. The sun's light 'causes the eye to see perfectly and the visible to appear'. The power of seeing in the eye is 'a sort of effluence from the sun'. Similarly, the power in the mind of thinking and perceiving is a sort of effluence from the Good, which causes the world to be perceptible and the mind to perceive. The sun presents man, as in a mirror, with an image of the divine element in his nature and in the world at large. The generations of men represent this divinity in them and over them by various forms or conceptions, which are their gods. The forms pass away but the Good which they adumbrate is the same for ever. Cf. *The Hymn to Apollo*:

I am the eye with which the Universe
Beholds itself and knows itself divine;

and *Par. Lost*, v. 171, 'thou Sun, of this great world both eye and soul'.

35, 36. This is the familiar thought conveyed in the metaphor of the painted curtain or veil (*Prom. Unb.* III. iii. 113 and note). Plato in the *Gorgias* (493) says—'I think Euripides may have been right in saying, "Who knows if life be not death and death life and that we are very likely dead".' (Euripides, *Polyeides* fr. vii.) The noonday gleam from the shadow of a dream means a bright shadow or repetition of a dream remembered in the day.

37 f. This part of the poem is steeped in his memory of Lucretius and the *rerum majestas* of which he indites. Our world of earth, sea, and sky, the Roman poet says, is only one among infinite other systems and is to them as a man's body is to the whole earth (vi. 650-2).

45. Thinnest veins, veins of air.

46-55. The flower is the imagination or mind, newly awakened to Nature's infinity. It holds heaven, which rests in its embrace like a drop of dew: it holds it but pays little regard to it, for it is opening out to a world hitherto unimagined, that is to say, the infinite All. Suns and orbits innumerable are furled and gathered in that infinite All, which is itself frail and fading, and its vast content so many evanescent bubbles. The Spirit of Nature in them is alone constant.

AN EXHORTATION

In Harvard MSS., dated 'April 1820', but assigned by Mrs. Shelley to 1819. Poets are forced to try experiments in poetry, that is to use new forms or motives because they must bid for the love and fame which are so hard to come by, and that is good for them as poets; but they should not lose their souls by flattering wealth and power. Rossetti supposes that Shelley is referring to this poem when he writes to Mrs. Gisborne, 8 May 1820, 'I send a little thing about poets, which is itself a kind of excuse for Wordsworth.' See Shelley's sonnet

To Wordsworth (1815) and the satire *Peter Bell the Third* for his opinion that the genius of Wordsworth faded into dullness because he betrayed the cause of freedom to an obsequious conservatism.

ODE TO THE WEST WIND

Shelley habitually conceives of Nature as borne along in a grand and rhythmic flux (see *Ode to Heaven*, 41–45). Among other manifestations of the great rhythm are the transmutations of matter or biological forms and the cycles of death and birth, of which one mighty operation is the theme of this Ode. The power of the autumn wind, destroying and implanting, is rendered in the deep and surging music of the *terza rima*, in a way recalling Wordsworth's *dictum* that the verse is 'not a dress of the thought but its incarnation'. Shelley used the measure for *Prince Athanase*, and made a few experiments in it in the following years (*Woodman and Nightingale*, *Tower of Famine*, and the translation of the Matilda episode from Dante). Then, in the *Triumph of Life*, he used it as a narrative medium with great felicity.

20. A reminiscence of some Maenad figures on the pedestal of the Minerva in the Florence gallery, of which Shelley writes in his *Critical Notices*: 'The tremendous spirit of superstition seems to have caught them in its whirlwinds and to bear them over the earth as the rapid volutions of a tempest have the ever-changing trunk of a waterspout, or as the torrent of a mountain river whirls the autumnal leaves resistlessly along in its full eddies. The hair, loose and flowing, seems caught in the tempest of their own tumultuous motion. . . .'

33. Cf. Shelley's letter to Peacock from Naples, 22 December 1818, where he speaks of observing in the Bay of Baiae 'the ruins of its antique grandeur standing like rocks in the transparent sea under our boat'. In the same letter he says: 'The sea was so translucent that you could see the caverns

clothed with the glaucous sea-moss and the leaves and branches of those delicate weeds that pave the bottom of the water.'

AN ODE, WRITTEN OCTOBER 1819

The rising of the Spanish Liberals against Ferdinand VII broke out at a given signal on 1 January 1820. This ode is obviously addressed to Englishmen and inspired by the 'Peterloo Massacre' of 16 August 1819; the title being, as Rossetti puts it, 'a publisher's dodge'. How serious was the expectation of an English civil war at this time may be judged by Shelley's letter to the Gisbornes of 6 November, warning them against keeping their money in Consols. 'The Ministers had, I doubt not, long since determined to establish an arbitrary government; and if they had not determined so, they have now entangled themselves in that consequence of their instinct as rulers, and if they recede they must perish. They are, however, not receding, and we are on the eve of great actions.' This ode, with the *Mask of Anarchy*, belongs to the several political poems written, and the many projected, by Shelley to encourage the people on the eve of the conflict and to exhort them to self-control. It is entitled, in Mrs. Shelley's edition of 1839, 'An Ode to the Assertors of Liberty'.

1-7. Be your own wounds only reminders of their deaths; of what other grief can ye think? But being dead they yet speak; who then can say they were effectually slain? Woodberry puts an exclamation mark at the end of line 6.

20. Shelley, in the *Mask of Anarchy*, exhorted the people to be cut down without resistance. The moral effect of this would be overwhelming. But he does not always abide by this extreme pacifism, see, for example, *Ode to Naples*.

THE CLOUD

'Shelley thinks of Nature as changing, dissolving, transforming as it were at a fairy's touch. . . . In his poem *The Cloud* it is

the transformations of water which excite his imagination. The subject of the poem is the endless, eternal, elusive change of things:

I change but I cannot die.

This is one aspect of Nature, its elusive change: a change not merely to be expressed by locomotion, but a change of inward character. This is where Shelley places his emphasis, on the change of what cannot die.' (*Science and the Modern World*, by Alfred North Whitehead. Cambridge 1928, p. 107.)

ODE TO A SKYLARK

Mrs. Shelley, in her note of 1839, says: 'In the spring (1820) we spent a week or two near Leghorn. . . . It was on a beautiful summer evening, while wandering among the lanes, whose myrtle hedges were the bowers of the fire-flies, that we heard the carolling of the skylark which inspired one of the most beautiful of Shelley's poems.'

ODE TO LIBERTY

This and the *Ode to Naples* are Shelley's achievements in the Pindaric form. In English literature, says Mr. Clutton-Brock, 'even the finest examples of it, of which Shelley's *Ode to Liberty* is certainly one, remind one of those modern symphonic poems in which the orchestration is apt to overpower the subject matter'. This fault belongs to the political odes of Coleridge, for which Shelley had a great admiration; and the motive of the apocalyptic trance was suggested perhaps by the *Ode on the Departing Year*. The poem was written early in 1820, after the rising in Spain which broke out on 1 January and retrenched and diminished the absolute power of Ferdinand VII. He was forced to call the Cortes, the Inquisition was abolished and the press made free. In 1823 a French Royalist army restored Ferdinand, who had been meanwhile deposed, and all the liberal measures since 1820 were rescinded.

On the cruelties, political and ecclesiastical, sanctioned by Ferdinand, see Shelley's pamphlet, *A Philosophical Review of Reform* (May 1820, ed. Rolleston, p. v). 'The liberalism of Europe was not, then, as Napoleon maintained, mortally stricken on the field of Waterloo. Not five years had passed before the Conservative governments of the West were unpleasantly reminded that the Spirit of Revolution was still abroad. There was ferment among the university students in Germany, there were riots in Manchester, insurrections in Naples, Piedmont, and Spain, in Greece premonitory tremors of nationalism, in France a splutter of little Carbonarist revolutions.' (Fisher, *History of Europe*, p. 888.)

MOTTO. *Childe Harold*, iv. xcvi.

16. This is the cosmogony already used in *Prom. Unb.* II. iv. 32 f. It is a selection from the account of the first things in Hesiod, *Theogony*, 116 f.

18. The 'daedala tellus' of *Lucretius*, i. 228.

23. See note on *Prom. Unb.* iv. 394. The account of the primal anarchy is a reminiscence of Hobbes's *Leviathan*, and his declaration that man, unchecked by the State, is 'a wolf unto man' ('homo homini lupus'). The evils that Hobbes attributed to a state of Nature Shelley attributes to a state of despotism.

58. Paros, an island in the Aegean, was famous for its marble which was used by many of the ancient sculptors.

73. Mock means represent, counterfeit.

74. The Acropolis. In the Bronze Age it was one of the strong places of Greece, surrounded by a wall and crowned by a palace, the Pelasgian inhabitants of the plain around it being subject to its master. When the goddess Athene was made its tutelary divinity it was known as Athenai and the community as Athenai. It was the 'latest oracle' presumably because Athene, whose shrine was the Parthenon, was regarded as an inspiring presence until the old gods vanished.

76-79. Shelley uses these lines again in his *Evening; Ponte al Mare, Pisa*. The image is taken from Wordsworth's lines on Peele Castle.

97. Camillus was the second founder of Rome. Having captured Veii after a ten years' siege in 396 B.C., he was driven into banishment on a charge of unjustly dividing the spoils. When the Gauls sacked Rome he was recalled and made dictator, and arrived just in time to chastise the barbarians as they were leaving the city. When the people demurred to the labour of rebuilding the town and wished to settle in Veii, he withstood them; and perceiving that the popular rights must be enlarged, he negotiated the Licinian Laws. He died in the year 356.

M. Atilius Regulus, the famous commander of the Romans in the First Punic War. In the year 255, after threatening Carthage itself, he was utterly defeated in a battle near Tunis and taken prisoner. In Roman fiction he was said to have been sent to Rome on an embassy to propose peace and the exchange of prisoners. Though knowing that vengeance would light on himself when, true to his word, he returned to Carthage, he opposed the peace in the senate as disadvantageous to Rome, and went back to die under the torture. See Horace, *Odes*, iii. 5.

99, 100. When oppression and wealth offended thee. The Mons Palatinus was the site of early Rome. From Augustus onwards it contained the palace of the emperor, the buildings and grounds of which gradually covered the whole surface. Here Horace and Virgil would recite their poems to their patron. With these lines on Rome the reader should compare the fine passage in the *Defence of Poetry*, beginning, 'The same revolutions within a narrower sphere had place in ancient Rome. . . .'

106. Liberty took refuge in the wild landscapes of the North—the same thought as Coleridge utters in the *Ode to France*, where Liberty, driven out from men, retires to her realm in Nature (unless Shelley means that she took refuge

among the northern tribes). Hyrcania was the classical name for the south-east coast of the Caspian Sea.

119. The image is of fire-breathing serpents coming from the sea, as did the serpents which killed Laocoon in the second book of the *Aeneid*. Shelley acknowledged that 'the poetry in Christianity and chivalry' effected two great advances upon the society of Greece—the abolition of slavery and the partial equalization of the sexes. Hence came the medieval and Renaissance poetry of Love with Dante and Petrarch to consummate it. See *A Defence of Poetry*, which fills up the gaps left by this Ode in his conception of History.

123. The olive was sacred to Pallas Athene whose chief attribute was wisdom.

124 f. The fine arts arose in Italy in the Guelf cities that resisted the attempts of the Emperors Frederick Barbarossa and Frederick II to become their masters (1150–1250). A number of petty potentates sided with the Emperors. The efflorescence of art in the two following centuries took place when these early republics had passed into the hands of strong rulers or despots, as Shelley omits to mention. But throughout Italy the love of beauty predominated in the general mind over the allurements of military renown.

138. Cf. *Hymn of Apollo*, iii. Tempest-winged, because of the chaos Error brings with it.

142. Leaden lance, wanting in the finer temper, prevailing by the sheer weight of the thrust. Cf. *A Defence of Poetry*, 'Dante was the first religious reformer, and Luther surpassed him rather in the rudeness and acrimony than in the boldness of his censures of papal usurpation.'

149, 150. The allusion is to *Samson Agonistes*, where Milton admits the fall of Liberty as the Restoration and prophesies its rising again. See the Semi-chorus, line 1687 f., where Samson represents the people of England, and his virtue is compared to the Phoenix.

151 f. Between the Reformation and the Revolution the hours in their multitudes look eagerly forward to the great

event, in their anxious expectancy forcibly suppressing their hopes and fears of the coming dispensation.

163. The Revolution in America.

170. Till the sweet influence of thy stars reasserted itself.

171 f. The war of the European powers upon the Revolution, and the rise of Napoleon.

176. Obscure in the eclipse of the light.

178. Perhaps this means pursued and overcome by the conservative forces against which he was pitted.

186. Pithecusa is the island of Ischia off Naples. The modern Capo Peloro is the north-east point of Sicily.

189. Her chains are the chains of plutocratic England.

192. Twins of a single destiny: England and Spain, both destined to liberty.

194, 195. The editions of 1820 and 1839 read, 'Impress us with a seal,/ All ye have thought and done: Time will not dare conceal.' This can only be construed by making 'All ye have thought and done' a vocative case. The reading of the text as here printed means: 'Appeal to the Eternal Hours enthroned in America to set their seal upon us.' 'Impress us with a seal' is the substance of the appeal, cast in the imperative mood. The sense of the final sentence is: 'Time will not dare conceal the thoughts and deeds which are the fruits of the Eternal Hours.' Forman would read: 'as from a seal', i.e. England and Spain appeal to America to impress on them all that has been thought and done by republicanism in America. But this leaves the last short sentence abrupt and indefinite as in the texts of 1820 and 1839.

196. Arminius, the deliverer of Germany, who destroyed the legions of Varus in the Teutoburger Wald, in A.D. 9.

201. 'King-deluded Germany' is merely deluded and not inwardly enslaved. She is inspired by 'truth's mysterious wine' and that makes her inwardly free.

230. A mockery put upon the deluded world by the impious pride of impure fiends.

231. Cf. Cancelled Fragment, and *Prom. Unb.* i. 377-8 and i. 483 f.

240. Their Lord is the innermost and unerring portion of the soul, referred to in the previous stanza.

241. 'He' refers to no one in particular. Whoever taught Man to master his circumstances made him the king of life.

249 f. Art is not willing to be blessed by Nature unless she may have for her empire all existence from the highest to the lowest.

258. Eoan, Eastern (from Eos ($\eta\omega\varsigma$) meaning the dawn).

264. Blind love, perhaps heroically blind to consequences.

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